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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS AND NOVELS

OF

R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. V.

CONTAINING

THE SECOND VOLUME OF AUBREY.

15305-8
28 | 10 | 19

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME,
AND BROWN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1813.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME V.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Aubrey's reception at Mariton—The family arrive at the parsonage. ..... Page 1

CHAPTER XXX.

The parsonage—Economical arrangements—The minister of religion—The magnanimity of a candid confession of error —The choice of a profession recommended to Arthur 6

CHAPTER XXXI.

The family appear at church—Similarity of country neighbourhoods. 20

CHAPTER XXXII.

An 'accomplished young lady from a boarding-school—The wife and uneducated daughters of an officer in the army.. 25

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Resolutions depending on the will of others seldom easily executed—Visits from more of the Spicer family—Emphatic looks and cecisbeos—A party to Warwick—A conversazione and concert at Spicer-hall—The danger of envy and stiff stays together. 38

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A little family chat on the absurdity of private set meetings to display talents—A hint on the object of reading to others, and the danger of emulation—Arthur's excursion —Colonel Spicer in love—An extraordinary visitor at the parsonage..... 57

CHAPTER XXXV.

New ghosts at the castle— A visit to Leicester—Happiness of the Aubreys—Arthur Aubrey writes to Mr. Cowper. 69

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Progress of Arthur's recovery—Friendship with Edmund Smyth—Cupid lurking beneath a shrub on the bank of a river—Aubrey opens his mind to Edmund—Arrival of a friend—Departure of Arthur and Edmund. 81

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Charles Sensitive— Emily's choice of a confidante—The beauty and blessing of candour—Time agreeably spent—The unexpected fate of Jacob's wife, and the place where she hangs. 92

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The pain of concealment—Arthur and Edmund's singular adventure at a retired cottage—The pleasure of freedom from disguise—The friends in chase of a beauty—Sequel of their adventure..... 99

CHAPTER XXXIX.

True love not easily subdued—The nature of it—Difficult to be kept a secret—A scheme of pleasure..... 114

CHAPTER XL.

A visit to Sudley-castle—Edmund loses his way, and achieves an heroic deed—Arthur's reception at Melford..... 122

CHAPTER XLI.

Mariton—Aubrey's first expenses—The apparitions of the castle seen at the parsonage—Hue and cry after them—Emily receives proposals of marriage from two of her lovers—Her conversation with Aubrey..... 130

CHAPTER XLII.

A breakfast at Spicer-hall—Another on the same day at the parsonage—Emily's successful study of self-command—She argues with herself in favour of Mr. Rowley—Result of her argument—Sensitive appears in a new light..... 141

CHAPTER XLIII.

Melford—Arthur no flint—Opens his heart to Edmund, and leaves Eden-bower—Suspicion as to the two men who attacked Lord Sudley—Arthur arrives at Mariton—Conversation with Aubrey—Time helped forward—Death of the rector of Mariton..... 152

CHAPTER XLIV.

Dr. Searle's will—State of Aubrey's finances—Arthur's choice of a profession—A letter from Sensitive—Presentation of the rectory—Family affection—Arrival of Sensitive—The Aubreys confirmed at the parsonage..... 164

CHAPTER XLV.

Sensibility—Alteration at the parsonage—Extraordinary apparition at Leicester—Mr. Cowper's adventure at Okeham—Arrival at Mariton—Resolution respecting Smyth—The ghosts of the castle..... 178

CHAPTER XLVI.

Mr. Cowper gives a reason for leaving Mariton—Hints a change to Aubrey—State of Sensitive's affairs—His determination respecting Arthurina—Progress of misfortune—New retrenchment—Revolution among the maids—Unex-

pected offer—Conduct of the Cambridges—Duns—Love and Poverty.....197

CHAPTER XLVII.

Determination respecting Arthur—Household affairs—One of the consequences of debt—Self-reproach—Cause of Arthur's voyage being postponed.....208

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Melford—Conversation between Mr. Cowper and Edmund—Unexpected result of it—The power of fancy—Mariton parsonage.....215

CHAPTER XLIX.

Edmund's bold address—Letters from Melford—A meeting of creditors—Arrival of a stranger—Result of the meeting of creditors—Aubrey arrested—Time of removal from Mariton determined.....229

CHAPTER L.

Being the longest, as well as the last, the contents of which it would be impolicy to prefix.....240

AUBREY.

Sweet are the uses of Adversity. SHAKSPEARE.

That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us; but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces the far greater part. JOHNSON.

VOL. II.

AUBREY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Aubrey's reception at Mariton—The family arrive at the parsonage.

Aubrey's reception at Leicester, and the impatience with which he was expected at Mariton, wrought a great change in his spirits. He wondered, that he had been able to shut his eyes to the incontestable right of his family to distinguished notice; to overlook the intrinsic merit of an amiable group, whose manners could not but produce a reciprocity of regard and respect; and he even reproached himself with a degree of illiberality, in taking the silly conduct of those who had been led by Sir Kit Keeping, as the criterion for his judgment of the rest of the world. His reception at Mariton was as gratifying to his pride, as that at Leicester had been agreeable to his worthier emotions. He and Arthur went over in a post-chaise, attended by Cæsar, who rode on horseback. They drove immediately to the parsonage, where they were received with great politeness by Mr. Dodson, who, while he put Aubrey in possession of a hand-

some house, requested to be considered as his host, till he returned for his family. The morning was agreeably passed in examining the premises, and in making an arrangement for such articles of furniture as Aubrey wanted, and Mr. Dodson was willing to part with. It may be remembered, that the former had no household furniture; what he possessed before his uncle's death having been disposed of when the family went abroad, as it would be out of fashion before their return to England. It was therefore Aubrey's intention to see his house first, order what he might want immediately, in the neighbourhood, and write to London for what could not be obtained in the country. This design was in a great measure rendered unnecessary by his having the option of entering the house nearly completely furnished. The moveables that had been put in by Mr. Dodson were good and fashionable; but there were a variety of articles which had been long stationary, and which he had purchased from the rector. These formed a considerable part of the furniture, and though they were not fashionable, they possessed a simple dignity derived from their appearance and from the proprietors to whom they had belonged, which had always obtained them more admiration than the lighter ornaments of modern taste. They consisted of massy wardrobes, marble slabs and vases, mahogany tables, large mirrors, and china jars. When Aubrey expressed his intention to include these articles, Mr. Dodson informed him, that Dr. Searle had repurchased them as soon as he knew of his preferment; but said, at the same time, that he had no doubt that the Doctor would let him have them. Having settled that the rest should be appraised on the Monday following, Mr. Dodson proposed a ride round the adjacent country before dinner. As Arthur soon after conducted his sisters

through the environs of Mariton, it is unnecessary here to say more upon the subject of its scenery, than that he and his father were pleased with all they saw. At dinner, they were joined by two gentlemen of the neighbourhood, whose polite attentions were to Aubrey an earnest of the agreeable society he and his family would enjoy in his new residence.

Aubrey, though not in the habit of performing the church-service, had occasionally, while residing at Aubrey-hall, both read and preached at Chelmsford, and was always admired in the desk as well as in the pulpit. The deep clear tones of his voice will not have escaped the memory of those who were pleased with his voluntary counterpoints to the sacred airs sung by Miss Melvil, the morning he unexpectedly broke in on the slander-stricken maid, in the Cambridgeshire cottage: they had lost none of that melodious roundness which had surprised and delighted his Emily. To this advantage, bestowed by nature, he had early added those which are to be obtained by application: his sentences flowed with ease, the emphatic words duly received their force, without preposterous violence, and the inflexions of his voice were harmonious. In syllabic accent and polite pronunciation he was uncommonly correct, having taken much pleasure in attending to the best speakers in the senate, whose style was his standard for reforming the deviations that sprang up in the pulpit, at the bar, and on the stage. In delivering a discourse, he had energy with little gesture: he impressed the truths for which he argued, by feeling, and appearing to feel them; but his zeal never approached to vehemence. The conviction he manifested in his countenance was his most powerful personal agency in convincing others, and he always

addressed the congregation in that natural earnest manner, which is the result of conviction.

As it had been settled almost immediately on Aubrey's arrival at the parsonage, that he should read the prayers next day, and Mr. Dodson preach his farewel sermon, which he had prepared in the beginning of the week, it was soon generally known, that the new curate was to officiate, and when Aubrey took possession of the desk, he had the pleasure of seeing a numerous congregation, a great part of which appeared to consist of persons of distinction. The affability that reigned on the countenances of these, and the general satisfaction which manifested itself in every part of the church at the end of the liturgy, now filled Aubrey's breast with emotions the very reverse of those which had been produced by the gloomy reveries of his journey; and he glowed with delight at the thought of the smiles, the attention, the respect, the happiness, in reserve for his beloved Emily and her children. Mr. Dodson's sermon made at first a mournful impression, for he was much respected, but the subject of sorrow was doubly counteracted by the consideration of his removal being the consequence of preferment, and by his vacancy being filled by one, who appeared so able to supply his place. In the afternoon, Aubrey again read prayers, and again his congregation was as numerous as in the morning. The remainder of the day was passed at the parsonage-house, in company with several gentlemen, who had been invited by Mr. Dodson to meet Aubrey. Every thing seemed to conspire to gratify his feelings; he was pressed to bring his family immediately, and Arthur being requested to remain at Mariton, while his father went for them, accepted the invitation. Aubrey was himself impatient to see his Emily and

his children settled in their new abode, enjoying the country, and participating his pleasures; he, therefore, staid no longer with Mr. Dodson than was necessary to conclude the purchase of his furniture. The estimate, as proposed, was made early in the forenoon of Monday. It amounted to three hundred and twenty pounds, for which Aubrey gave Mr. Dodson a draft on his banker in London. He then took leave of his worthy predecessor, who promised to wait till Wednesday for the pleasure of being introduced to Mrs. Aubrey, and leaving Arthur with him, set off for Leicester, with Cæsar, in a post-chaise, which the latter had hired at Loughborough.

He found all his family at the house of the Rector, by whom he was again welcomed with the affection of a father. The account he gave of his excursion was extremely pleasing, both to the Searles, and to his own family. During his absence, Mrs. Aubrey and his girls had seen several agreeable families, had been at church, and visited the castle, near which the Doctor's house stood, being in the Newark. Pleasantly however as they passed their time, Emily and Arthurina were secretly impatient to join their brother, nor was Mrs. Aubrey sorry to find, that Mr. Dodson's situation would fully excuse her not accepting Mrs. Searle's invitation to spend the week at Leicester; and the stay of the family was accordingly limited to another day, in the course of which Aubrey in vain urged the Rector to dispose of the articles of furniture that he had repurchased of Mr. Dodson. Dr. Searle said, that though he had been prevailed upon to sell them, he had always felt ashamed of it; for they were such things as seemed to go naturally with the house, and that he should now consider them in that light. They should be at the service of the family as long as they occupied the parsonage; but he

had resolved never to sell them again. Aubrey was under the necessity of acquiescing in this determination, and the party having taken an affectionate leave of their amiable friends on Tuesday night, left the inn next morning, Aubrey, in great spirits, filling Arthur's place in the coach, which Cæsar followed on horseback. The road lying through a pleasant country, the travellers were gratified with the prospects, which increased the gaiety they set out with. The kindness they had experienced, with what they saw, what they had seen, and what remained to be seen, excited their imaginations, and they remarked, narrated, and anticipated, with the volubility of gay and happy minds. Arthur-William was not the least talkative, nor was Mrs. Miller frugal of joyous expressions; yet, as Arthur and Mr. Dodson handed out Emily and Arthurina at the parsonage, she could not help shaking her head, and saying to her mistress, who sat fronting her in the coach, "'Sbidlikins! this is like our jaunts to "Aubrey-hall."

CHAPTER XXX.

The parsonage—Economical arrangements—The minister of religion—The magnanimity of a candid confession of error—The choice of a profession recommended to Arthur.

THAT the arrival of a new rector or a vicar should set the parish bells in motion is not surprising or uncommon, but it does not often fall to the lot of a curate to be rung into his curacy: the rattling, however, of a coach and four into the village, levelled the distinction, and Mariton steeple vibrated with as loud and continued peals as it had ever resounded

with before. The family took possession of their abode with undiminished dignity, the illiberal malice of the Pall-mall Baronet was forgotten, and Aubrey was himself again. Mr. Dodson took his leave early, as he purposed to sleep at Leicester, but before he went recommended his cook and housemaid to Mrs. Aubrey, who, from the character he gave of them, was glad to take them into her service: thus almost every thing that was wanted seemed prepared without trouble, and as it were by enchantment. The packages from London arrived at Loughborough the day before, and were immediately forwarded to Mariton.

Left to themselves, the Aubreys soon explored every part of their mansion, ran over the garden, and strolled through the fields belonging to the parsonage. The remainder of the week, as they had few visitors, none indeed but the gentlemen whom Aubrey had met by Mr. Dodson's invitation, was devoted to putting the house in order, making economical arrangements, and settling the disposition of their time. The plate and china were ceremoniously bestowed in their proper places, the books intellectually classed on the shelves found in the study, the piano and harp harmoniously established in the sitting-room on the ground-floor, and the organ erected in the large room over it. The house being a double one, was sufficiently commodious, though but of two stories, with slanting garrets. There were bed-rooms enough for the family, and two spare ones. The large room on the first floor, looking on the garden and over the country, had been rendered spacious, at the expence of the adjoining one, which was a small bed-room allotted to Arthur. When the organist of Mariton, who lived at Loughborough, and was employed to place the organ, had completed his work, exceeding great

was the joy of the whole family, and chaunts, hymns, and anthems, filled up the day. The ground-floor of the parsonage was laid out thus: the entrance was a small hall, on the right of which was the study, and on the left the dining-room, which had a second door opening into the sitting-room; at the end of the hall a passage led to the garden, and another to the right led past the offices and kitchen to the court-yard. The sitting-room was well proportioned, and had a glass door, which opened on a lawn, edged with flower-beds and shrubs, very gently descending to a small beautiful river, one of the banks of which was formed by its turf. This was the trout-stream mentioned by Mr. Cowper.

The view of the country from the windows of the house, which backward faced the south, was rendered rich by woods and fine pastures; but there was an object about half a mile distant, on the opposite side of the river, which heightened the pleasing landscape into a picturesque scenery. This was the ruins of an old castle, on an elevated, unequal, rocky piece of ground, which for many acres was unfit for cultivation. It belonged originally to one of those powerful and haughty barons of this kingdom, who had proved themselves such formidable subjects in the early reigns after the conquest. The great Duke of Lancaster afterwards became the lord of it, but it was entirely neglected, and gradually fell into ruin. Many murders having been committed within the walls, it is not wonderful that it should have become a haunted place by tradition, and it still continued stamped with the reputation. It was rarely visited by the country people in the day-time, and never approached by night. Though the soil near it denied a supply of juices to useful vegetation, some hardy shrubs here and there concealed the sides round the bottom of the castle, many parts of the

mouldering walls were clothed with ivy, and though no trees stood near it, the perspective of the wood beyond gave it, from the parsonage, an appearance of an immense pile on the skirt of a forest. It furnished a very sublime point of view to most of the houses in the neighbourhood of Mariton, but from none did it appear finer than from the parsonage. This prospect was an object of high estimation with the Aubrey family, nor were they satisfied with gazing at it; they explored its recesses, and enjoyed the solemnity of the spacious chambers, some of which were nearly overhung with the deep green tapestry of the ivy, and roofed by the contracted firmament settling on the lofty parapets. The extreme dimensions of the building, the thickness of the walls, the magnitude of the apartments, the purpose of the fortifications, the projections of the towers, the tottering turrets, the rugged scite, the solitude to which superstition had doomed it, and the silence reigning around and in every part of the castle, raised those emotions of wonder and admiration, which while they distinguish mankind from brutes, are in a higher degree peculiar to the sons and daughters of taste. The sublime and beautiful thus combined on the face of the country to delight the inhabitants of the parsonage, health and harmony reigned within, and the testimonies of respect, with the pleasures of society, only waited the ceremonial of public appearance.

Meanwhile, Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey resolved to settle their establishment on the most frugal plan, and accordingly consulted, before the young people and Mrs. Miller, on the necessary arrangements. "Economy," said Aubrey, "is of importance in all "situations of life, and of the utmost consequence "in those where errors are not to be retrieved by "further plans of retrenchment, but complete ruin

" is the sure result of excess. Let us then resolve " to begin our residence here with the utmost care " and circumspection. It is true we have a pros- " pect in the friendship of Lord Aynsford, but when " it may be realized is uncertain, and the dear Doc- " tor Searle has taught us to dread the event that " is to precede it. My dear Emily! my dear chil- " dren! I know your hearts are superior to the " temptations of luxury; I know that you value the " pleasures of the palate so low, that frugality in " diet will scarcely be a virtue in you; but it will " be of great moment in the distribution of our ex- " pences."—" Oh! my dear papa!" cried Emily, " we none of us care for eating and drinking. While " we have music and books"—" And rambles " through the country," added Arthurina; " and " rambles, as Arthurina says," continued Emily;— " And pleasant neighbours, and sometimes a dance," said Arthur—" O yes," continued Emily, " and " dances, as my brother says"—" And turkies and " tarts," added Arthur-William—The little fellow's addition created a hearty laugh—" I have not " finished my speech," cried Emily: " With mu- " sic, books, country walks, and dancing, who would " ever think of eating and drinking? As for my " part, I could live upon bread and cheese all my life." —" So could I," cried Arthurina, " with a few " vegetables, and there is plenty in the garden."— " A little solid meat, however, after a walk," said Arthur, " will not be amiss. I don't mind eating, " but mine is not a vegetable stomach, Emily; par- " ticularly after exercise."—" I," said Arthur-William, " like the ducks and green-pease we had " yesterday; what say you, 'Sbidlikins?"—" They " were very nice, indeed, sir," said Mrs. Miller, " and as I shall superintend the poultry-yard, you " shall often have them; 'Sbidlikins! I think poul-

" try be the best and cheapest fare in the country." —" But Mrs. 'Sbidlikins," said Arthur, " we must " have a butcher."—" I hate a butcher," cried Arthur-William.—" Tell me why," said his brother. " Because he is so cruel," replied Arthur-William. Mrs. Aubrey, who let no opportunity slip of removing prejudices from the minds of her children the moment they appeared, asked him if the cook was cruel. " No, that she is not," replied he, " she " looks so good-natured, and speaks so good tem- " peredly, and she feeds the chickens."—" And " who, my love," said his mother, " killed the ducks " we had for dinner yesterday?"—" I don't know, " mamma."—" They were killed, you know."— " To be sure."—" Then ask Miller who killed " them."—" 'Sbidlikins!" said Arthur-William to Mrs. Miller, " who killed them ?"—" Indeed, sir," said she, " it was Nanny." He stared. " Now listen " to me and remember what I am going to say," continued his mother.—" It is more cruel to take dislikes " without reason, than to slay an ox. Indeed you " will find that there is no cruelty in the one, and " there certainly is in the other. We cannot live " without food, and God has thought proper, how- " ever irreconcileable it seems with the tenderness " of some hearts, to appoint animals to be a part of " food. I will not enter into the reasons at pre- " sent: your brother and your sisters know them, " and so will you by and by, but I merely tell it you " now to prevent your growing up with such a pre- " judice. Prejudice, you know, is having wrong " notions of things, from not enquiring into truth, " by which you may become ridiculous or disgust- " ing, or even wicked. If Providence has given " animals for our food, the person who provides " meat for the table may have a very disagreeable " office, but cannot be charged with cruelty, if he

" does not wantonly give pain. It is, I own, an of-
" fice that a mild disposition would be unwilling to
" take; but only observe what would be the case if
" every body's heart was so tender that they would
" not hurt any thing that has life; *you* would have
" no ducks, and Arthur would have no mutton: and
" as Nanny is not cruel, no more is the butcher, if
" he is a good man. Take care of prejudice, my
" dear Arthur-William; will you, for my sake?"—
" I will, mamma," cried he, " and I won't hate a
" good butcher any more." The family laughed at the simple equivocation of Arthur-William, and Aubrey resumed his observations on the proposed economy of the house. After a few more remarks on the wholesomeness of plain food, it was resolved *nem. con.* never to have more on their table, when they were alone, than a joint and a pudding, or some of their own poultry, with the seasonable produce of their garden.

They next proceeded to discuss the consumption of grocery; when it was resolved, that tea, coffee, and sugar were absolutely necessaries, but that a great reduction should be made in the articles of spicery. Coal and candle came next under consideration: with respect to the former, it was found that they could not do without a fire in the kitchen, in the sitting-room, in the dining-parlour, and in the study; but then it was settled that the other rooms of the house should only be aired occasionally; and with respect to lights, it was resolved that it would be extravagant to burn wax, when they had not company. The cellar it was determined should have a certain supply, but not to be frequently resorted to. Barrels of good table-beer should stand in the outer vault, for the constant use of the servants, while a stout-bodied ale was to be kept for extraordinary occasions. Some of the

binns were to be filled with good old port and sherry, and a place was allotted to spirituous liquors of the best quality. The wine-decanters and liquor-case were always to be put on the table after the cloth was taken away, but the family were to be very indifferent whether they drank any or not, unless they had a friend with them. As to dress, it fortunately appeared that Mrs. Aubrey and the girls were so well stocked with clothes and materials for making them, that they would want little in addition for a considerable time; and Aubrey and Arthur had left their measure in London with their tailor, to whom they proposed to send occasional orders.

These points being discussed and settled, it remained to be debated what was to be done as to moving about the country. Prudence evidently required that they should lay down their carriage for the present; but the necessity of going from one place to another as imperiously demanded the use of horses. At first, they could none of them see how it would be possible to do without them; but then not less than three would be requisite, for there must be a saddle-horse for Cæsar, as well as a pair for the coach; and neither three nor two could be supported on the fields annexed to the parsonage, unless they gave up the idea of keeping cows. Two cows and one horse might very well be fed on the land, buying oats for the nag, but it could no more. Either the cows, with all the rich cream, the butter, the milk, puddings, custards, and syllabubs, they would afford, were to be given up, or the horses relinquished. One alternative more indeed there was, but it was too imprudent, even in thought, to find a proposer in the economical circle, for land was very dear about Mariton. "Can't you—?" It was upon Arthurina's tongue, but she turned it off by saying, "As the paddock will keep one

" horse, what think you now of a *one-horse chay of* " *a Sunday?*" It was at length determined that their carriage should positively be laid down, but that the coach should stand in the coach-house, and be kept very nice by Cæsar, to be occasionally used, as circumstances might induce them to send for post-horses from Loughborough; and that one horse should be bought to serve either as a saddle-horse or for drawing a gig, which would be found very convenient. As the garden was not large enough to require constant attention, it was resolved to continue the plan which had been pursued by Mr. Dodson, who agreed with a gardener to crop and keep it in order by periodical attention, occasionally having a village boy or girl to weed. But though they avoided the expense of a regular gardener, there was yet another domestic whom they could not do without; a dairy-maid was wanting, for the care of two cows was too much to add to the cook's province; and if it was too little to employ one person entirely, the girl would be found useful in assisting to keep the house clean, and in helping to wash clothes. The dairy-maid accordingly was soon determined upon, and Nanny, the cook, recommended her younger sister Patty, who was used to cows from her birth.

The household arrangements being thus made with the strictest attention to economy, Aubrey communicated to his family the serious designs he had formed respecting the sacred profession, the functions of which he had resumed. Of whatever faults he was conscious, so far from labouring to conceal them from his family, or even to extenuate them, it was his custom to turn the avowal of them to their advantage and his own. Anxious as he was to teach his children to distinguish accurately between right and wrong, he had no alternative, for

it was impossible to deceive them without corrupting their minds; nor had he the least fear of weakening their respect for him, by observing, "these "are errors, I must endeavour to repair them as well "as I can, and you must ever avoid falling into the "like;" on the contrary, he knew that such confessions, guided by such motives, gave him a higher claim to their esteem. "Emily, my love," said he to Mrs. Aubrey, "how negligent have I been of my "profession! but I do not wonder, when I consider "the motives on which I embraced it. I consented "to assume the sacred robe and band, in order to "provide for the second son of a family, in whose "representative it was thought necessary to centre "the wealth and pride of their ancestors: when, "therefore, by the death of my brother I became "that representative, is it surprising that I disen-"gaged myself from an object no longer necessary for "the purpose for which I had obtained it? Could "I go back to the time while it was optional, retain-"ing the judgment of my experience, no interest "whatever should prevail upon me to undertake the "holy office, for I should not think myself, at that "early period of life, equal to the strict discharge "of its duties. It is an awful engagement; the "most important that man can enter into, made vo-"luntarily with his Creator, to labour to instruct his "fellow-creatures in the knowledge of their eternal "interest, to purify their hearts, to resolve their "doubts, to console them in affliction, and to keep "them on their guard in the hours of joy and tran-"quillity. A minister is the vicegerent of the Al-"mighty. How sublime the thought! how arduous "the task! who that reflected upon it would has-"tily undertake it? What talents, what virtues are "requisite to form that stupendous character which "stands forth the ambassador of the Deity! In the

" course of my reflections, since my reverse of for-
" tune, an extraordinary thought occurred to me on
" this subject. My fancy formed a new creature;
" I imagined the ministry of religion assigned to a
" superior order of beings, continued by succession,
" like men on our own planet. Not a fallen, nor
" incorporeal race; not superior to man in faculty,
" nor exempt from the passions of the mind, but
" endowed with a strength of virtue that should pre-
" serve them genuine and good, and possessed of the
" highest degree of human knowledge and talents;
" fully acquainted by intuition with the nature of
" the appetites, yet totally free from them; their
" frames, while existing on earth, sustained by some
" unperceived fluid inhaled with the air, and after
" the service of fifty years, their spirits translated
" unknown to men, leaving successors to rise from
" their bodies by a new law of nature. Of such a
" being self-excellence and success in his ministry
" would necessarily be the supreme good, the end
" and enjoyment of his existence; to such a being
" the task would be appropriate; but for me,
" scarcely arrived at years of discretion, placing the
" chief praise of religion in a rhetorical essay deli-
" vered from the pulpit, bred up in ease, and fond
" of it; for me to dare to accept the divine deputa-
" tion was no less monstrous than my total neglect
" of it, when it became unnecessary to worldly en-
" joyments, was shameful."—" I fear," said Mrs.
Aubrey, " that I am more to blame than you, yet
" I will not say a word in opposition to the reproach
" you cast upon yourself, for it seems to promise an
" attention that may make amends for the past; and
" let me assure you, I am of opinion, that in your
" new-created being you have done nothing more
" than paint some of the worthy heads of the
" church, your unknown fluid and new law of na-

" ture excepted. Men so far, at least, superior to " your imaginary ministers, as they have had to " contend with, and have surmounted those obsta- " cles which you have so ingeniously removed from " your creation. What think you of the bishops " of * * and * *? of Dr. Searle? of Cowper's " friend, Mr. Grey? The character may not be ge- " neral, but it exists, and may be emulated.'— " My imagination, I allow," replied Aubrey, " was " excited by contemplating myself. You know I " do not mean, my dear Arthur," continued he, addressing his son, " to cast a reflection on the body " of the clergy; they are in general learned and " pious; yet it were to be wished that our connec- " tion with the rest of society were better under- " stood, and more generally realized. Prayers and " a lecture would not constitute the office of the " minister I have imagined. They who are about " to take orders, like me, merely for a provision, or " who, like me, having taken orders, think no more " of their engagement, will perhaps, sooner or later, " feel like me, that it had been better never to have " undertaken the office."—" My dear sir," said Ar- thur, " I have heard you before condemn yourself, " and I thought you very good at the time; but I " am more delighted than I can tell with a saying of " Lavater's, which I lately read, and which you now " bring to my mind: ' He who has genius and elo- " quence sufficient either to cover or excuse his " errors, yet extenuates not, but rather accuses " himself, and unequivocally confesses them, ap- " proaches the circle of immortals whom human " language has dignified with the appellation of " gods and saints.' " Arthur's soul was in his face when he said this; it was one of those looks and speeches not uncommon among the Aubreys, which threw a sudden glow of pleasure around the whole

circle; for their sympathy was as rapid as their love was cordial. His mother blessed him in her thought, and by her smile. His father pressed his hand and said, "This is very amiable, Arthur; I "feel it at the bottom of my heart. Whatever "truth or error there be in the aphorism you have "cited, one thing is certain; whoever attempts to "refine vice into the appearance of virtue, or pre- "tends to appear to his family what he is not, for- "feits his real portion of merit, and never fails to "be discovered, and to be secretly, if not openly "despised. It is the part of a father to point "the way to his children; to lead it, as far as he "can; but when he halts in the road to perfection, "he will not, if he be not lost to virtue, keep them "back, by pretending to be the standard of excel- "lence. He will call to them to go on; he will "glory as much, if not more, in their progress as "in his own, and he will feel in some degree his de- "fects compensated by excellencies, the seeds of "which were sown by him, though the fruit re- "ceived its perfection from the native vigour of the "soil. With respect to myself, I will now endea- "vour, as your mother presages, to make amends. "I will become acquainted with all my parishioners, "high or low, rich or poor; they who need a friend, "an adviser, a comforter, shall find one in me. "The public service shall be duly attended to, and "at home we will pass our time in rational studies, "innocent amusements, and hospitality. As to you, "my dear Arthur, I wish that I could send you to "the university, but alas! you are deeply involved "in the effect of the dreadful, unaccountable negli- "gence of my uncle. It may yet be in my power "to enable you to finish your studies there to ad- "vantage; meanwhile your time will not be lost at "Mariton. You must choose a profession; you

" must choose it before you go to Cambridge. I " would have you consult your inclination in the " choice, and to do that you must take a cursory " reading of the elementary books of each. This " you will easily do in the course of the next year. " Your education has given you a foundation for " any; fix decidedly, then go regularly to work in " your application, and I have no doubt you will in " a few years make yourself sufficiently master of " what you determine on, to support yourself ho- " nourably, and acquire a competence equal to the " best enjoyments of life. You will have time " enough for the reading I recommend, without " giving up your classics, or even our general " studies."

Arthur declared his determination to follow his father's advice, and to begin with Blackstone's Commentaries. He said he should be happy to be master of a profession, not only from foreseeing that it would be necessary to his support, but because it would make him of use in the world, which not one in a thousand could be said to be of those who had no profession. In this opinion Aubrey concurred; and the girls, forgetting the previous reading recommended by their father, were for settling the choice immediately. " What will you be, Arthur?" cried Emily; and without waiting for an answer, added— " Be a farmer, and live in the country."—" That's " what Edmund Smyth is to be," cried Arthur-William, who began to be tired of holding his tongue. This recollection of Arthur-William's produced an emotion in Emily's mind which she could not account for, but it was so slight that she did not endeavour to trace it. " Be a clergyman," cried Arthurina; " what can be more delightful than to " have such a place as this, and to make all the " people about you good and happy?"—" If I was

"Arthur I know what I would be," said Arthur-William; "I would be a lord, like Lord Aynsford, "and then he might make me a bishop."—"Very "well," said Arthur, "I will consider, and tell you "what I think this time twelvemonth." The resolutions respecting the household economy were reviewed and approved, and the Aubreys, conscious of meaning well, gave way to the natural tendency of their minds to be pleased; were innocent, cheerful, and happy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The family appear at church—Similarity of country neighbourhoods.

However deserving of censure, a candid censurer will not perhaps think it unpardonable that the first appearance at church was not entirely actuated by the spirit of devotion, and that heavenly views were considerably mingled with terrestrial concerns.—Mrs. Aubrey and the girls certainly devoted some part of Saturday to consultation on dresses for Sunday; and Sunday was a gala day. The mother and daughters might have been considered as the three Graces, for though a little *enbonpoint*, Mrs. Aubrey retained the fresh and blooming air of youth; her animated eyes gave great intelligence to her lovely countenance, and her easy motion supplied undiminished grace to her elegant figure. Emily was now nearly as tall as her mother, and Arthurina very little shorter. The church being near, and the morning fine, the family all went afoot. Aubrey had preceded them, and was in the reading desk when they entered. Arthur and Mrs. Aubrey, who held

Arthur-William by the hand, led the way; and Emily and Arthurina followed, attended by Mrs. Miller; Cæsar, in the Aubrey livery, had gone on before to open the pew door. If the congregation drew off the thoughts of the Aubreys, they no less attracted the attention of the congregation. In the intervals of the service all eyes were turned upon the clergyman's pew, which supplied food for the usual passions of curiosity, admiration, and envy; for Mariton, like other places, had inhabitants of various characters: however, the general feature of the day was affability.

In the pulpit Aubrey gave as much satisfaction as in the reading-desk. His sermon was introductory, and the more interesting as the application of it might be considered as peculiarly relative to himself and his hearers. In the first part of his discourse he stated at large the duties of the minister of a parish; and the remainder of it he devoted to a concise view of the religion he had sincerely embraced on examining its evidences, and which it behoved him to support and to teach. The subjects were connected, and he treated them with that simple eloquence which is both convincing and endearing. Full of the pious resolutions he had formed, he had begun the service with unusual zeal, and as he pronounced the concluding blessing, he looked around him, and his heart glowed with the sacred affections of his office.

After church the family received many salutations from the parishioners, and were visited by the gentlemen who had dined with Aubrey and Arthur at Mr. Dodson's table, and who brought with them several of their friends, both gentlemen and ladies. These Mrs. Aubrey, on their admiring the organ, invited to return in the evening, without ceremony, to hear some sacred music. Heralds of the rest of

the inhabitants, they mentioned the names of the different persons who were at church, rated their fortunes, and briefly sketched their histories. Except the names, all that the Aubreys heard was pretty much the same as they had known in other country places: a few had very large incomes, and did not reside at Mariton more than two or three months in the year; many had good incomes, and went away only for two or three months; and some had limited incomes, and these seldom, if ever, left the place. As to character, a few were spoken of in terms of the highest panegyric, many were praised with a *but*, and some were swept off with a hint.

In all this there was nothing singular, but when Mrs. Aubrey enquired concerning the family who sat in the gallery, in the red pew, with the yellow curtains trimmed with silver fringe; after a pause, one of the ladies said: "The name of the family is "Spicer; Mr. Spicer made a large fortune by trade, "and has been purchasing estates in the county for "for many years; about five years ago he disposed "of his business, and came to reside at Spicer-hall. "He possesses much influence in the affairs of the "county—he is a justice of the peace"—"And an "orator at our meetings," added one of the gentlemen, with a smile. The rest of the visitors laughed, except a young gentleman, who said, that Miss Spicer was one of the most elegant, accomplished, and charming girls in the kingdom. "No doubt," said the lady who spoke first, "for she has expecta-"tions of at least thirty thousand pounds, and was "educated at one of the most eminent boarding-"schools in London, which she has lately left, and "is just come down to Spicer-hall. It is said she "plays and sings finely."—"Oh divinely!" cried her panegyrist; "I have had the pleasure of hear-

" ing her several times since her arrival."—" I am " glad to hear it," said Emily Aubrey. " She is " esteemed a perfect beauty," continued the lady, who now fearing to commit herself, determined that the rest of the information respecting the Spicers should come from the mouth of Miss Spicer's admirer, to whom she addressed herself; " and full of " life and spirits, I think, Mr. Gosling?"—" Oh " yes!" replied he, " and replete with wit "—" Mrs. Spicer a kind mother?"—" Oh! very " fond of her."—" Mrs. Spicer herself is a fine " woman."——" Very."——" But not quite ac- " cordant with Mr. Spicer?"—" Oh! hate one " another like cat and dog."—" A pity that, for the " sake of the family; but I hope the rest harmonize " better."—" Why, faith, so so, but I don't know; " I never interfere; however they disagree one " with another, they are all unanimous in their opi- " nion of Eudoxia; they think her the most beau- " tiful, the most accomplished, and loveliest of " women, as she really is."—" I thank you, Mr. " Gosling, in the name of the ladies present."— " Thank me! for what?"—" O! only for your im- " partial account of Miss Eudoxia Spicer."—" Not " at all," replied Mr. Gosling, " I only tell you " the truth." Here the company laughed. " Her " brothers are accomplished too?"—" So so!" said Mr. Gosling, " Bob Spicer manages a violoncello " very well, but Billy labours at his tenor-fiddle."— " Does Mr. Gosling play on any instrument?" said Mrs. Aubrey. " I am but an indifferent musician," replied Gosling, " but I sometimes fall in with the " triangle, ma'am."

A general smile, stifling a laugh, indicated to Aubrey that Mr. Gosling began to be in danger of becoming the butt of the company, a situation in which he never could bear to see any man: the er-

rors of the heart he thought fairly open to raillery, but incapacity he considered as a misfortune not to be laughed at. He communicated his fear to Mrs. Aubrey by a look, who immediately changed the subject, by saying, that she had been much struck with the countenances, modesty, and propriety of demeanour of three ladies who sat below in a seat within three of her pew: "They appear to me," said she, "to be a mother and daughters—who are "they?"—"Oh," said a lady, "you mean Mrs. "and the Miss Cambridges. They are good sort "of people, but they do not visit much, being in "very confined circumstances; they are, however, "received every where, and often make morning "calls. In the absence of Captain Cambridge, an "officer between forty and fifty, who having served "in the army in India, where he lost an arm, has "undertaken a voyage to recover a large property "for the widow and children of a brother officer, his "friend, his wife and daughters are living in a "small neat box that he built himself, on a piece "of land which unexpectedly descended to him, "through a distant relation, who had purchased it "on purpose to build upon, but had never put his "design into execution. The young women are "well enough, but their father has always been too "poor to give them any accomplishments."—"I "think their countenances very interesting;" said Mrs. Aubrey: "I hope we shall see them at the "parsonage."—"No doubt," replied the lady, "they will call."

In the rest of the talk during this morning visit, though most of the inhabitants were mentioned, there was nothing peculiar in them to arrest the attention of the Aubreys. The Spicers and the Cambridges seemed to be the only ones that had made an impression on their minds; and when left to

themselves they remarked, what a sameness there was in the general view of well-bred persons, who to strangers and common acquaintance maintain that similarity of character, which is the result of similar education, while the genuine traits of the mind are seldom actually discovered beyond the domestic pale, or the circle of the serious transactions of life.

CHAPTER XXXII.

An accomplished young lady from a boarding-school—The wife and uneducated daughters of an officer in the army.

Novelty, and the genuine frankness of the Aubreys, failed not to make a lively and favourable impression on the minds of their first visitors, who again returned after the evening service, to enjoy the Sunday concert Mrs. Aubrey had offered them. If they were pleased in the morning with the conciliatory manners of the strangers, in the evening they were fascinated with their musical powers; and the whole of the ensuing week Mariton and the neighbouring parishes, far and near, rang with the report of the acquisition the country had gained. Every day brought company to the parsonage, till all the inhabitants had paid the welcome visit. The house was in constant motion; all was life and spirit, joy and gratulation. Never before was poor curate so visited, but then never before did poor curate take possession of his curacy under like circumstances. He came, in the first place, as sole minister of the parish; and in the next, the name and connexion of Aubrey were still remembered, while the extent of his misfortune had not yet reached the country, though it was pretty generally known that he had

had an immense loss. The extent of the loss was even considerably sunk in the thoughts of the family themselves, by the strength of the hope placed on the friendship of Lord Aynsford; a hope that having once received its impulse before they knew Dr. Searle, was supported by its original force, without any reference to the painful association which arose from the affection he had excited in their hearts. In short, the Aubreys and the parishioners coincided in viewing the fair side of things.

At the end of the week the family were expressing their surprise that they had seen none of the Spicers, when a thundering London rap at the door proclaimed fashionable visitors, and Cæsar soon after announced Miss Spicer. Her figure was of the middle size, inclining to corpulency, to conceal which her stiff-boned stays was drawn as tight as possible about her body, making a very visible abrupt division of her person into upper and lower protuberances of considerable magnitude, and throwing the blood up into her neck and face, where the confinement of the circulation collecting the gross particles of the habit, threw out successive crops of pimples. Her features were not common, yet had nothing striking either as to beauty or ugliness; her light hair, obedient to the power of hot iron, curled in thick stiff ringlets over her eyes, which were light grey on a large white orb, over which, when she winked, the lids had a considerable journey to make in their contact and retrogression; her nose was an acute angle, the longer side journeying from her front curls to the point of the short side which proceeded to the formation of her upper lip; her mouth was wide, but her teeth were good, which was a great advantage to the whole turn of her countenance; and being aware of this, she took care that they were not often concealed by their coral veils.

Her nose would have made her ugly, her teeth counteracted its tendency, and to common or partial observers the beauty of one part spread beauty through the whole. Her countenance was expressive of pain from the pressure of the iron on her stomach, that voluntary *peine forte et dure**, which the muscles and nerves suffer in the cause of imaginary symmetry; and with the appearance of pain the emotions of real pride and affected humility held a divided empire.

In she walked, her hips rolling from side to side, her bosom handkerchief considerably preceding her ceinture, and the border of her train two yards in the rear. Instead of a curtsey, she nodded her head twice or thrice, and, as if long acquainted, said—"How do do,—how do do—how do do"—her lips drawn down on each side to display her teeth. She was alone. The Aubreys had risen to receive her, and Mrs. Aubrey, in her usual kind manner, expressed how glad they were to see her. When they were seated, addressing Mrs. Aubrey—"My mo-"ther," said she, "bade me give her compliments, "and tell you she caught a severe cold last Sunday, "which has confined her ever since, or she would "have accompanied me to wait on you to-day." As she delivered this common message, she gave continued short jerks of her head forward, a gesture she thought expressive of animation. In a similar style she made an apology to Aubrey for her father, on the score of business; then turning abruptly to Emily, who sat next to her, said, "How do you "like the country?"—"I was always fond of the "country," replied Emily. This natural answer called forth an affected laugh from Miss Spicer, who ended it with saying, "I mean this country."

* A penance by the ancient law, for a prisoner who would not answer to his arraignment.

—" I beg your pardon," said Emily, " I like it " very much."—" Better than London ?"—" A " great deal." This preference excited another laugh in the accomplished Miss Spicer, who was in the habit of giggling whenever she detected a mistake of any kind, or felt the superiority of her own taste when contrasted with that of others. " I love " London," said she, " better than any place on " earth, and the more, because I have seen so little " of it yet; but I know what a charming place it is " by what I have seen, and I hope I shall be able to " persuade my father to live a great deal there, or " at least to let mamma and me."—" Does Mrs. " Spicer like town as well as you do?" said Mrs. Aubrey. Miss Spicer laughed.—" She does in- " deed," said she, " and often stays there a long " time together without papa."—" I hope," said Arthur, " that Miss Spicer will not desert Mariton " just as we are come to it."—Miss Spicer laughed —" I don't know how that may be," replied she, " I am but just come myself; you must ask Bob " when you see him; he is vastly fond of London, " as every fashionable young man must be; he is " very fashionable, is Bob."—" Was that he we " saw at church?" Miss Spicer laughed—" What " would Bob say to such a question? he would not " be taken for Billy for the world: Billy is a good- " tempered fellow though; now, he hates London, " and likes the country, where, on account of his " broad shoulders, and thick bandy legs, he is called " the Honourable Billy Spicer: but Bob! Bob is " just what a man ought to be:—in the army, well " made, handsome, *degagé;* learned to dance of " Didelot, to sing of Kelly, to play the violoncello " of Crosdale, makes verses like what's his name, " and spouts like Palmer."—" He must be very ac- " complished indeed," said Aubrey, smiling. Miss

Spicer laughed—" Yes!" said she, " and to distin-
" guish him from Billy every body calls him the
" Right Honourable."—" Is he in the country—
" shan't we have the pleasure of seeing him?"—
" Certainly," replied Miss Spicer: " he went from
" town to Newmarket, and we expect him very soon
" here."—" We shall long to see this accomplished
" brother of yours," said Mrs. Aubrey, " but in
" the mean time will not Mr. William Spicer favour
" us with a visit?"—" To be sure! Oh! Billy is
" very much of a gentleman, though he is not so
" elegant in his person as Bob." She then began to pull the neighbours to pieces in the usual way, to divert her from which, " Miss Spicer," said Emily Aubrey, " we have heard of your excellence in mu-
" sic; I hope—"—" Is your piano in tune?" said Miss Spicer, rising and going to the instrument, then, without waiting for an answer, continued, " You play, don't you?"—" I am learning," replied Emily. " How long have you learned?"—
" I think I may say all my life."—" Who was your
" master?" said Miss Spicer, striking the cords.
—" I have principally learned of mamma."——
" Oh! only of your mamma! Will you sing?
" what shall I play for you?"—" Here is a volume
" of Handel."—" Oh! I can't bear him."—" What
" shall I give you then?" said Emily, naming the works of several authors. " Have you got the *sol-*
" *dier tired of war's alarms?*" said Miss Spicer. Artaxerxes was immediately produced, and Miss Spicer played the symphony of the song; during which poor Emily, observing the performer to be inaccurate in her time, and meditating an apology for herself, was suspended between the apprehension of offending, and the reluctance of creating discord, when she was happily relieved from her dilemma, by finding that she was totally forgotten by

Miss Spicer, who, at the conclusion of the symphony, began the song, and went completely through it, without once taking her eyes off the book. Her voice was good, except in her attempts to raise it to the very high notes of this screaming bravura of Arne's, and there she miserably failed, though she pressed her epiglottis as close, and opened her jaws as wide as she could. The Aubreys, surprised at its going off so well, applauded her sincerely. She smiled audibly, and continuing in the seat, said, "Now, Miss Aubrey." Emily in vain begged to be excused, offering to accompany herself on the harp in some other air. Miss Spicer insisted on having the pleasure of accompanying her in the same song, and began without ceremony. Though she had herself reconciled the measure of the mutilated minims and crotchets, playing exactly as she sung, it was impossible for Emily to do it, as she had no guide but the time fixed by the author, consequently before she had half swelled the minim over the first syllable of the word *soldier*, the piano-forte was jigging away the quavers of the word *tired*. Emily stopped, and again declared her inability to execute the air. Miss Spicer, understanding her literally, and conscious of her own superiority, laughed, shut the book, and said, "Never mind, my dear, we shall do better "another time, don't be disheartened, for it is a "very difficult song." The Aubreys could not help smiling, and Arthur, who was standing behind her, shrugged up his shoulders; "Come, Emily," said he, "sing—" —"It is later than I thought," cried Miss Spicer, rising and interrupting Arthur, —"I shall have the pleasure of hearing Miss Au-"brey another time. I hope we shall see you at "Spicer-hall!"—then with the jerking familiar nod, which from the use of it by her and her brother, the

Colonel, had obtained the name of the Spicer nod, said "Good day, good bye," and out she walked, stiffly poking her chest forward, and majestically rolling in the rear, just as she walked in.

"Bravo!" cried Arthur; "hey for affectation "and self-conceit! how good and compassionate "she was to you, Emily! *we shall do it better an-* "*other time—don't be disheartened—it is a difficult* "*song*—I'll tell you what; we will have our revenge "of her the very first evening we spend in her com- "pany, for you shall sing *the soldier*, and Arthurina "shall play the accompaniment." Mrs. Aubrey and the girls laughed. "She richly deserves to be "mortified," said Aubrey, "but I do not like your "motive, Arthur. What triumph can our minds "have in such a revenge? it would be lost in the "disgrace of the contest."—"I do not mean, my "dear sir," said Arthur, "that my sister should con- "tend with Miss Spicer, but check her conceit."— "I fear," replied Aubrey, "that in doing that, "Emily would only raise a worse passion, of which "you saw Miss Spicer has the seeds in her mind by "the manner she had begun to talk of her neigh- "bours before your sister turned the subject to "music. I never met a young woman who stood "in more need of admonition, but irritation and ex- "posure seldom effect a reform. In time, when we "have been longer acquainted, I shall perhaps find "proper occasions to admonish without provoking "her. It is my duty; but it must be done delicate- "ly, and who knows but we may have the satisfac- "tion of seeing her become wise and amiable?" As he spoke, Cæsar announced Mrs. and the Miss Cambridges.

Mrs. Cambridge was a middle-aged woman, rather above the common size, well formed, and possessed of a very pleasing countenance; her daugh-

ters were tall, unfettered, handsome, and prepossessing. Sophia, the elder, had rather more animation in her features than her sister Mary Ann, whose face and mien expressed timidity. They entered the room with as much ease as if bred at a court, at the same time with that propriety of demeanour which, attracting Mrs. Aubrey's notice at church, had left a favourable impression that was now confirmed by their appearance. "We come," said Mrs. Cambridge, advancing towards Mrs. Aubrey, "to pay you our visit of ceremony, and in delaying "it till to-day we were influenced by the hope of "finding you more disengaged than you would have "been earlier in the week; these are my daughters, "Miss Cambridge and Mary Ann." Mrs. Aubrey assured her she was happy to see her, and the whole party having interchanged salutations, and taken their seats, Aubrey said he hoped in the course of no long time to have the pleasure of Captain Cambridge's acquaintance. "Indeed I am afraid it *will* "be long," replied she; "his friend Major Ed- "wards left him guardian to his sons, and trustee of "their fortunes; they are grown up young men. "After receiving a good education in England they "returned to India, and found their father dead, "leaving the will he had made while we were there "unaltered. Mrs. Edwards was ignorant of busi- "ness, and my husband's presence was considered "as necessary, not only to the arrangement of their "affairs, but to the very salvation of their fortune. "Cambridge, who would think nothing of going "through fire to serve a friend, thought as little of "the water between this and Bengal. He grieved "to leave us, but it was a duty; he would have "taken us with him had it been possible. He has "been gone two years, and I fear another will not "bring him back."—"His conduct is very noble,"

said Aubrey. "No wonder," replied she, "for he "is in every thing a noble fellow."

The unaffected style, and evident sincerity of this eulogy, more than atoned in the minds of the Aubreys for the breach of that custom which prohibits the commendation of our near relations; it exalted her. But Mrs. Cambridge was not ignorant of the custom. "Forgive me," said she, "your observa- "tion drew from me the sentiment of my heart, but "do not therefore think us self-praisers."—"Nothing "is easier," said Mrs. Aubrey, "than to distin- "guish been vain-glory and the natural amiable im- "pulse of the soul. I should be sorry to have lost "this instance of the latter."—"If he live to re- "turn," replied Mrs. Cambridge, elated by this sentiment, "you will find him fully justifying it."—"We miss him very much," added Miss Cambridge; "he has seen a great deal of the world, and is so "sensible and so cheerful." This effusion of the daughter's was no less pleasing than that of the wife, and its effect was very sensible in the countenances of the Aubreys. "Were you abroad with your "papa?" said Arthurina to Mary Ann. "Yes," she replied, "we were in Bengal near three years "when we were very young, but he did not like that "we should grow up in India, and mamma brought "us home."—"Dear!" cried Emily, "it must have "been dreadful to part!"—"It was indeed, Miss "Aubrey," said Mrs. Cambridge, "and particular- "ly as there was a misunderstanding between the "government and one of the most powerful Na- "bobs of the country. It soon after broke out into "hostilities, in the course of which Captain Cam- "bridge received a wound, by which he lost an arm. "This misfortune, however, restored him to us the "sooner: we were not above eighteen months home "before he rejoined us, and was put upon half-pay.

" We then lived in France for some time, till inhe-
" riting from one relation a small piece of land in
" this village, and receiving a legacy in consequence
" of the will of another, he determined to settle
" here. He built the house we live in, and laid out
" our little garden himself."—" I wish he would
" come back," cried Arthur-William, who was a physiognomist by nature, and perceived in the faces of the Cambridges the attaching lines of affection. " He will, my love, by and by," said Mrs. Cambridge, putting out her hand with a smile to Arthur-William, who ran and shook hands with her. " You talk French then," said Emily to Miss Cambridge. " We have no opportunity," replied she, " to talk here; but we strive to keep it up among " ourselves, to please my father, who wishes that " we should not lose what we learned abroad."— " Does not Miss Spicer speak French?" said Mrs. Aubrey. " We have heard that she does," replied Miss Cambridge, " but she has not been here above " six weeks, and we have met her only twice."— " They say," cried Arthur, " that she is very accom-
" plished."—" We have heard so," said Miss Cambridge, " and particularly that she excels in music; " but we are no judges, if we had even been favour-
" ed with an opportunity of judging. We have " been told to expect much gratification here in " that delightful attainment."—" We are all fond " of music," said Mrs. Aubrey, " and cultivate it in " consequence with great perseverance. I trust, " however, we make it an innocent pursuit, by not " neglecting more material ones for it; for however " rated it may be as an accomplishment, it can only " be valuable as an amusement. As such alone we " esteem it, and as such it affords a pure pleasure; " but as an accomplishment it certainly does not " deserve the place it holds in society."—" Accom-

" plishments," said Aubrey, who instantly perceived and accorded with his wife's design, " which de- " pend on the acuteness of the senses, rank far be- " neath the lowest intellectual attainments. Moral " reasonings impressed upon the mind; an acquaint- " ance with the appearances of nature, with the his- " tory of nations and distinguished persons, with the " diversions, customs, and manners of the world; a " turn for poetry, a knowledge of languages; even " reading and writing well, are surely infinitely more " valuable than music and dancing, which are so " highly appreciated. The whole merit of these " consists in the possession of a good eye, a good " ear, and supple limbs; whoever inherits such per- " sonal qualities from nature, will be easily made " proficients accordingly: but intellectual accom- " plishments require a union of superior faculties " with industry, and give a higher relish to society. " It is laughable to observe the effects of the rage " for teaching music; ear or no ear, voice or no " voice, every Miss must play and sing to the total " obstruction of all conversation, and generally to " the dire annoyance of every ear tuned to harmo- " ny. Who would not rather be able to repeat a " fine poem, and to enjoy its beauties, than to play " the finest sonata that ever was composed?" Mrs. Cambridge looked at her daughters with a pleasure she thought understood alone by them, but without assenting or dissenting to Aubrey's remarks, she said that neither she nor her daughters had any skill in the science of music, but that it was always a great gratification to them, and she thought it a desirable accomplishment.

Aubrey dwelt on the superiority of books and rational conversation, and, with the help of Mrs. Aubrey, imperceptibly drew forth the talents of the Miss Cambridges, whose conversation became ex-

tremely interesting, and far exceeded the expectation of the Aubreys. They were not only well versed in the works of Pope, Thomson, Gray, and Goldsmith, but spoke with delight and intelligence of many parts of Paradise Lost, a favourite of their father's, who took great pleasure in the sublime battles between the angels and the devils. They quoted some of the most beautiful passages of Shakspeare, and supported their remarks by allusions to the sentiments of celebrated authors; but these were made without the slightest degree of pedantry, as arising from the interest of the subject and a lively recollection, and had not the slightest appearance of an affected display of a little learning. Some observations on the concluding stanzas of the celebrated Odes of Dryden and Pope, respecting the different effects attributed by them to the powers of the divine inventress of the organ, again led to the subject of music. It was agreed to confirm the general preference given to Dryden's performance, because it had been justly said, that "the passions "excited by him are the pleasures and pains of real "life, whereas the scene of Pope was laid in imagi-"nary existence; Pope was read with calm acqui-"escence, Dryden with delight; Pope hung upon "the ear, and Dryden found the passes of the mind;" but Miss Cambridge thought that there was no passage in Dryden's to compare with the picture given to the mind by these lines:

> When the full organ joins the tuneful choir
> Immortal powers incline their ear:
> Borne on the swelling notes our souls aspire,
> While solemn airs improve the sacred fire;
> And angels lean from heav'n to hear.

"True," said Aubrey, "but was not the hint taken "from the other ode?

> "She drew an angel down."

"It may be," replied she; "but does that give so "divine an idea as *angels leaning from heaven to "hear?*"—"I think with you, Miss Cambridge," said Mrs. Aubrey, "that the inclining of a celestial "host is not matched, and that the invention of the "vocal frame is more honoured by it, than by the "descent of a single angel."—"It was an obvious "thought too," observed Mrs. Cambridge; "for it "seems naturally suggested by sacred songs ac- "companied on the organ, which, when well played, "almost gives an idea beyond that of listening. The "sounds of the instrument being vocal, it requires "no very great stretch of imagination to sup- "pose the heavenly choir joining in the anthem." —"The idea is sublime," said Aubrey, "and if it "could be generally diffused during an oratorio, "would heighten the glow produced by the grand "choruses of Handel." Here the subject turning upon the voice, from Dryden's describing the organ as a vocal frame, Aubrey declared a decided preference to the human voice above all instruments, and asked Mrs. Cambridge if the Miss Cambridges sang. She said that they had never learned any kind of music, but that they had a good ear, and their voices had been sometimes much praised. She did not pretend to be a judge, but to her they seemed very sweet. This produced a request which was accorded without hesitation, and the Aubreys were charmed to hear the sisters sing together, not only in very melodious tones, but with just harmony. In return, Emily and Arthurina sung to the pianoforte, accompanied by Arthur's violoncello; after which Mrs. Cambridge, however delighted, recollected that she had far exceeded the limits of a first call of ceremony; and, having expressed her pleasure, and stayed till her daughters had given way to their rapture, rose to go, begging Mrs. Aubrey to

lay the blame of her long visit on those who had been the cause of her forgetting time. Emily and Arthurina shook hands in a friendly manner with the sisters, and the whole family, thoughtless of ceremony, accompanied the Cambridges to the door, where they parted with smiles, and mutual assurances of a desire to cultivate a friendship. The Aubreys returned to the sitting-room, overflowing with the praises of these *well-enough*, *unaccomplished* young women, and their amiable mother.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Resolutions depending on the will of others seldom easily executed—Visits from more of the Spicer family—Emphatic looks and cecisbeos—A party to Warwick—A conversazione and concert at Spicer-hall—The danger of envy and stiff stays together.

The visits received by the Aubreys were all returned, and in the usual progress of time the family were established on an agreeable and easy footing with the inhabitants of Mariton and the neighbouring places. They never once thought of the Dirks, the Vultures, or the Grinaways, who had seats at different and distant parts of the country, but, according to their usual characters, enjoyed time as it passed, innocently, and doing all the good in their power. Aubrey, adhering to the resolutions he had formed, not only visited the rich, but every class of his parishioners, on the principle of duty. Among the former, however, he soon found the pales of independence and the barriers of habit opposed to all his designs of admonition. His religion was repelled to the desk and the pulpit; there he was at-

tended to and admired; but at table, and in company, he found that he must be Mr. Aubrey, or the parson; courted for festive qualities, or quizzed for sanctity. Among the lower orders he found a spirit of metaphysical and political enquiry, combined with a warped imagination and a defective logic, the offsprings of debating clubs established at Loughborough and other towns, that no less fenced off in private the moral and religious interference of the minister, and penned up his ministry within the walls of his church, which, on various motives, was constantly attended by most of the inhabitants. Aubrey, however, determined not to be discouraged, for as Rome was not built in a day, neither was Mariton to be made another Melford without time, and the influence of such a ministry as that of the Greys.

Meanwhile, in the social civilities of their neighbours, the family found sufficient resources of variety when they left their studies, and were disposed for company. By some they were attracted more than by others according to the approximating degrees of the mental affinities. With none were they inclined to unite more completely than with the Cambridges; yet though, when they met, the attraction seemed mutual, the steady adherence of Mrs. Cambridge to the rules she had laid down on parting with her husband was an obstruction to frequent visits. The Aubreys loved the Cambridges more, and saw them less, than any other of their neighbours. Nor were the Spicers at first very ardent visitors. When Emily and Arthurina returned Miss Spicer's visit she was not at home, and it was full a fortnight after before either her father or mother appeared at the parsonage.

On the arrival, however, of Col. Bob Spicer, who, on hearing of the beauty and accomplishments of Emily Aubrey from some of the inhabitants, wished

to form an intimacy between the families, Mr. and Mrs. Spicer had separately on the same morning called. Mr. Spicer was neither tall nor short, but square built, and inclined to corpulency. His countenance, in spite of an habitual, hypocritical smile, was expressive of a turbulent spirit, and a designing soul; his eyes rolled from side to side when he spoke, as if the motion of them were necessary to secure his ideas, and assist in giving them birth, and his under lip, of a disproportioned magnitude, hung cushioned on his chin. Though ignorant of almost every thing but the business by which he made his fortune, he had a great ambition to be considered as a man of very superior intellect, which led him to a conceit that he possessed eloquence enough to gain the admiration of country people, though his attempts never failed to expose his ignorance, and render him ridiculous. He was of too much importance to make a long visit; he conversed on wool and cloths with Mrs. Aubrey, on tolls and highways with Aubrey, took no notice of any other person in the family, and left them in a hurry to attend a vestry on business relative to parish rates.

Mrs. Spicer was of a very dissimilar character, except in the conceit of superior parts; but then the objects of it were of a different nature from those of her husband's: fine writing, poetry, correct pronunciation, emphatic words accompanied by emphatic looks, French and Italian, and an independent taste for drawing and music, though she neither drew nor played, were the accomplishments on which she prided herself. This pride was still exceeded by personal vanity. Her person vied with that of her daughter in tightness and abrupt protuberances, but on a much larger scale. The features of her face were ill assorted: she had a small nose between

large cheeks, and thin lips with a wide mouth, which never opened over less than the whole of the upper gum; but the natural effect of these deformities was considerably counteracted by her eyes, which were good both in shape and colour, and, like her daughter's teeth, were to common observers a sufficient passport for the lady's pretensions. What, however, most distinguished Mrs. Spicer in her own opinion from the vulgar herd, were the acuteness of her feelings, and the delicacy of her sentiments, and she consequently had always her mental attachments; one particular person in her confidence on all topics of the soul, with whom alone she commerced by emphatic looks in company, and in private by the uninterrupted flow of congenial thought in expressive language. Of these attachments Mrs. Spicer had had many, but never more than one at a time, except once, and finding it incompatible, she gave up one of them. The usual changes of these particular friends were produced by some capricious interference of her husband, some unexpected detection of a dissimilarity of sentiment, or some offer of a more agreeable cecisbeo, for the honour of which office there had been more than one contest; but whether these arose from admiration of the lady, or of the valuable presents she was known to make to her bosom companions, was never clearly decided. Mr. Gosling was her present *commercer*. She brought him with her from London the year before, while Miss Spicer was at school, with whom he managed also to keep upon good terms; his praises being liberally bestowed upon her, with Mrs. Spicer's consent, who, far from being jealous of her daughter's perfections, was proud of them, as being chiefly derived from herself. Gosling was a simple, good-tempered fellow, resolved not to make enemies, and generally successful in making friends, by

combining with inferior abilities the habit of praising with some skill. He was laughed at and liked. When Mrs. Spicer paid her first visit at the parsonage he attended her, and astonished the Aubreys by the perseverance with which he returned her emphatic looks, during the short conversation that took place, in which she displayed the stores of her mind. Having had all, or most of the talk to herself, she went away highly pleased with the Aubreys, who the very next morning received cards of invitation to a *conversazione* that day week, to be followed by a concert.

Scarcely was the answer accepting the invitation written, when an agreeable voice singing was heard in the hall, and immediately after Col. Spicer was announced. He did not give over singing till he was quite in the room. He was a little well-made man, and his countenance would have been a pleasing one, had it not been for a certain archness he invariably sported in his left eye, the corner of which was for ever on a half wink, while a seemingly significant smile persevered in possession of the correspondent corner of his mouth, and for the beard left on each side of his face, descending in whiskers, and diminishing as they descended, from an inch in breadth to a point almost reaching his chin. He was dressed in a plain green frock, cut off behind in the utmost extravagance of the fashion, while a stiff cape almost towered above his powdered head. Over three distinct underwaistcoats he wore one of buff casimere, the bottom of which met the top of his buckskin breeches across his chest. His buckskins buttoned over the calves of his legs, the rest of which was covered with a flesh-coloured silk stocking, and a slipper tied with a string for a shoe; a round hat and whip in his hand, and a quizzing glass suspended to his neck by a black ribbon, and

bobbing about on his leather waistband, completed the person of the Right Honourable Bob Spicer. He saluted the Aubreys with the Spicer nod, and addressed them with all the familiarity of old acquaintance, ogling Emily and her mother by turns, and not knowing on which to bestow the greater share of what admiration he had to spare from himself. He talked of their dress, of their roseate health, of the report he had received of their voices, and sung them an airy French song. "*Vive la baga-*" *telle!*" cried he in concluding it, then added, addressing Emily—"La divine Emilie parle François —n'est ce pas?" Emily smiled, and with a bow declined entering into conversation in French. He then asked her to join in a duet with him, and mentioned several French ones; but all singing was avoided by the Aubreys, who, though his voice was sweet, were determined not to feed his vánity. Not to offend him, however, Mrs. Aubrey promised to join in a duet with him at Mrs. Spicer's concert. He thanked her with a leer, and turning suddenly to Arthur, said, "There will be a good show of "pretty faces on Thursday at Warwick, I have just "had a letter that tells me great preparations are "making for the county ball—will you go?—come, "what say you?—I am going—we will come back "the very next day if you like it." Though Arthur wished to see Warwick, and liked the proposal much, yet he did not think that his father would approve his going as the companion of the proposer. "I thank you, Colonel," said he, "but I am too "much engaged this week to accept the pleasure "you offer." Colonel Spicer then applied to Aubrey, and said that Mr. Rowley was going, and that they should be very glad of Arthur's company. The mention of an amiable young man, living near Mariton, of whom Aubrey had a good opinion, re-

moved the objection he felt to his son's going, and determining beforehand to speak to Mr. Rowley, he told Arthur that he had better take the opportunity of seeing Warwick and the company. This removing the only objection Arthur had, it was resolved that he should accompany Mr. Rowley and Col. Spicer to Warwick; and the latter, after strutting several times about the room in a familiar way, took his leave.

"Is this," exclaimed Emily, as soon as he was gone, "is this the Right Honourable all-accom-"plished Bob Spicer!"—"There is great frivolity "in his appearance," said Aubrey, "but he is "young; let us hope he may improve."—"To be "sure," observed Mrs. Aubrey, "there is no length "to which hope may not carry us."—"He smelt "very sweet," said Arthur-William. This created a laugh, and Arthurina taking the little fellow by the hand, ran with him into the garden, whither they were followed by the rest of the family. The next day, which was Tuesday, Aubrey saw Mr. Rowley, and begged his attention to Arthur in their jaunt to Warwick. As it was a town famous in ancient story, he wished that the party should not merely go to the ball and back the day after, and therefore proposed that they should go over on Wednesday and stay till Saturday. This was agreed to, and Arthur, on quitting Mariton, for the first time of his life, found himself from under the immediate guidance of his father. The whole family saw him depart with pleasure, because they knew it was to give him pleasure, and his sisters would have been glad to go to the ball with him, though they were aware, that neither of them was yet old enough to appear at a public assembly. In the absence of their brother, the girls took a delight in strolling daily on the Warwick road, and talking of him; and on Saturday

afternoon, they went on in hopes of meeting him so far, that returning they were benighted, and walked full half an hour in the dark before they reached home. It was fortunate for the family, that Mr. Rowley was with Arthur, as it saved them much pain, when it appeared, that the party prolonged their stay. Sunday passed, and Monday, the day fixed for Mrs. Spicer's concert, yet none of them appeared; but Aubrey fully depended on Mr. Rowley, and was not uneasy.

In the evening he attended Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, who were dressed with great taste, to Spicer-hall. After ascending a handsome staircase, they went forward into an antichamber, where a footman was stationed to announce the names of the company. He opened the door to the right, and ushered Aubrey and the ladies into the drawing-room with the usual ceremonies. Mrs. Spicer, seated at the top of the room with two of her most intimate friends from Loughborough, on a large elegant sopha, waited till the Aubreys came up close to her before she rose, which at last she did, in what she thought a graceful zigzag, making two sides of an angle up, and, without stopping, the same two sides of an angle down, begging at the same time with a gracious smile, that they would take their seats. They accordingly bowed and filed off. As they were not late, their chairs were not very far from the sopha. By degrees the room filled, and the Aubreys sat in constant expectation of the commencement of the promised conversation. For half an hour, nothing passed but an interchange of salutation, and then tea was handed round: the gentlemen stood together in the middle of the floor discussing markets, parish affairs, and country banks; the ladies sat, some in silent observation, some talking with those next to them. The master of the

house was not present; Aubrey found afterwards that he never would attend his wife's coteries, which were always the source of ill-humour, contention, and violence between them: the Colonel was at Warwick; and the honourable Billy Spicer, with Mr. Gosling for an aid-de-camp, was the only master of the ceremonies. Billy lived with his father to be his secretary and to keep his books; and, as he had great hopes in his consideration, he generally, when there was any variance between his father and mother, sided with the former, in his presence; but otherwise, he was always subservient to the latter, who accordingly made every allowance for the prudence of her son. While Mr. Gosling's attentions were paid to the sopha, Billy Spicer, though certainly his legs were less formed than Gosling's for parading a drawing-room, walked round the circle of ladies to ask if the tea were properly served.

In this manner was the *conversazione* conducted for an hour and a half while the company sipped tea, till at length a general laugh among the gentlemen roused a general curiosity among the ladies, and Mrs. Spicer raising her voice, called out, "Do, let us have that: we must have that"—on which, silence ensuing, one of the gentlemen addressing Mrs. Spicer, said, "Madam, we were talking of the evil arising from country banks, and I believe the subject was fully exhausted, when I told the following anecdote which occurred the other day at Leicester. Old Pockett, the banker, has long been in the practice of taking sixpence in the pound for paying money for drafts, if the payment were demanded in cash, or notes of the bank of England; but no deduction was expected, if his own notes were taken. A poor man from a distant part of the country, who had received a draft on Pockett, not liking country notes, re-

" quested to be paid in cash, or Bank of England " paper. He was told the custom, against which " he protested, pleading his circumstances, and " urging, that where he lived, he might find a dif- " ficulty in passing country notes. It was in vain " for him to reason, or appeal to old Pockett's feel- " ings—Pockett had never known any thing gained " by reason or feelings, but he was very sensible of " the value of a good custom, and he assured the " poor man, that it was impossible for him to break " through it. On this, the man was angry, but " standing a few minutes to consider, he bethought " himself, and said—' Well, if I must, I must; I " can't afford any deduction, so let me have your " own notes.'—The full amount of the draft was " immediately paid to him in Pockett's notes, and " he was made to write a receipt on the back of it. " Instead of withdrawing, he stood some time smil- " ing, and looking alternately at the paper, and at " the old banker, who at length asked him, why he " he did not go.—' Why, look ye, Master Pockett,' " said the man, ' these are all your notes, true " enough—I have examined every one of them—you " won't deny it, I am sure, for you are an honest " man, Master Pockett—there they are, I present " them for payment, refuse me the cash for them, " if you dare." The company laughed heartily at the miser's dilemma, and rejoiced that he was outwitted. After which, Mr. Gosling caught the interval of silence that succeeded to inform them, that he had been soliciting Mrs. Spicer to favour them with reading some favourite piece, and hoped, that he should be generally seconded—" Oh! pray, " Mrs. Spicer—Oh! pray, Mrs. Spicer," was immediately heard from every quarter.

As her *conversaziones* included readings, the lady was easily persuaded; she bowed affectedly,

and saying, "since you will have it so," took from under one of the bolsters of the sopha, a thin book, elegantly bound in red morocco, and opening it at the place marked, said she would read the much admired poem of John Gilpin, which she prefaced with some remarks on the different manner in which she had heard it read in town. She then began, and went through the unfortunate ballad, according to her own ideas of propriety, sometimes slow and pompously, sometimes galloping with Johnny, misplacing stops, accents and emphasis, and at every verse, exchanging emphatic looks with Gosling. At first, the Aubreys felt for her; but as she proceeded, she became so truly ridiculous, that they could not help enjoying the farce. Her own consciousness, however,—so uncertain a thing is consciousness!—far from whispering that some of her hearers either pitied or laughed at her, fully confirmed the admiring interjections of the dear Gosling, and the extorted applause of civility. She gave time for the company to interchange their remarks, and then requested some lady or gentleman to oblige her with the perusal of a favourite *morceau*. This being universally declined, she regretted that Italian was not generally understood, as she should have had great pleasure in reading to the company, one of the sweetest pieces ever composed. Mr. Gosling assured her, that the company regretted the loss, and the conversation then turned, among those who understood any thing of it, upon the sweetness of the Italian pronunciation, and those who did not understand it were informed, that every word ended with a vowel. "Then," said Mrs. Spicer, "the certainty of the pronunciation, "so much superior in that respect to our tongue. "By the way, Mr. Aubrey, I wonder to find you in "the pulpit pronouncing the word KNOW-ledge,

" *nollege*. Why do you not adopt the clerical mode of " speaking it?"—" One reason, Madam," replied Aubrey, " is, because it is clerical. I know no " right that the clergy have to depart from the esta- " blished rules of pronunciation. It is an innova- " tion of a few years standing, arising from an af- " fected nicety of correction, and I am sorry that " it is more general among the clergy than among " any other body of men; for, not only the genius " of the English language requires it to be simpli- " fied in its sound like other words of the same na- " ture, but the clerical mode of pronouncing it is " pedantic and coarse on the ear; nothing but the " aptitude of running into imitation could have led " such numbers to follow an example in a sound so " unmelodious. Accordingly, you find it adopted, " only where a show of learning is aimed at; but, " among the higher classes of extempore speakers, " and among the lower classes of society who are " led by their ear, the word takes its natural sound." —" Nae, Maister Aubrey," said a Scotch gentle- man, " I canna agree wi ye, for we awwaise caw it " *know*ledge i' the North; and in gude troth, it daes " na soond sae very unmusical to my ear."—" I did " not say, it was not Scotch," replied Aubrey, " but that it is not English; and habit, whose in- " fluence is universal, may render harsh sounds " pleasing."—" But, Sir, hoo is't you can mak oot to " change *know* into *nol*?"—" As we make out," said Aubrey, " to change *fore* into *for*, *ho* into *hol*, and " many more. The Scotch say, *fore*head, and *ho*- " liday, as well as *know*ledge; but, as the clergy " do not seem to have any inclination to adopt these " sounds from the North, I hope they will gradu- " ally desist from that which they have adopted."— " You will allow," said Mrs. Spicer, " that it is " grander to the ear."—" No, indeed, Madam,"

replied he, "I cannot; unless it be that kind of "grandeur which is out of nature." Here Mrs. Spicer exchanged emphatic looks with the dear Gosling.—"Your calling this error clerical," proceeded Aubrey, "brings to my mind, that I not "long since heard a man, and he was a teacher of "languages too, talk of the *London pronunciation*, "and *Oxford pronunciation* as contradistinguished, "and he instanced it in the word *nasal*. 'Oxford,' "said he, 'has it *nasal*, with the hissing sound of "*s*, whereas, London says *nazal*.'—He was angry "that I doubted of the error being general at Ox-"ford, and from stating the fact, he patronized the "fault, on which I contented myself with assuring "him, that the Cantabs were better orthoepists."—"Hoot," said the Scotch gentleman, "orthoepy "is the very lawest of aw the sciences, and beneath "the attention of men of learning awtogether: it's "a mere buznis of soons, a mere maiter of moon-"shine. What signifees what a shell is, guin the "kairnal be good."—"Indeed," replied Aubrey, "I am no such verbal stickler as to break squares "with any man for his pronunciation; but, I cer-"tainly do not think it unworthy the attention of "the most learned; and you cannot but know, Sir, "that at all times the most learned have been soli-"citous to pronounce well, and to establish a stand-"ard for their language. The prosody of the "Greeks and Romans was invariably fixed on rules "which have descended to us, and are in the hands "of every school-boy; and though we are ignorant "of their accent, we cannot doubt that it was re-"gular and uniform. The Italians and French "have shown their attention to the stability of their "pronunciation, and no polite nation feels itself "above this care but the English: our words are "constantly changing both their sound and sense.

" As for the word *knowledge*, I really believe it will " recover itself, in spite of the Episcopal authori- " ties, which at present maintain it in the pulpit; " but I fear the word *oblige* *, will not be so easily " retrieved. There is no such sound in the En- " glish language as *eige* with the long *i*, and the " sound of *obleige* †, is very grating to the ear. It " is one of the companions in a class of words, where " nature has directed our tongue to the preserva- " tion of the original accent, the ear being repug- " nant to a change, and till lately, it was always " pronounced *obleege*, by polite speakers—

> Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers *besieged*,
> And so obliging that he ne'er oblig'd.

" Nor would Pope, licentious as he was in rhyming, " ever have thought of rhyming *eige*, with *eege*."— " But," said Mr. Gosling, " what do you say to " Lord Chesterfield, Mr. Aubrey? Was not he a " polite speaker?"—" Certainly," replied Aubrey, " and I have not a doubt, that he always pro- " nounced the word *obleege*."—" What will you lay " of that?" retorted Gosling. " Who is to decide the " bet?" said Aubrey, " he that is competent to de- " cide the bet, can decide the question without the " bet."—" My Lord himself," replied Gosling.— " I see, Sir," said Aubrey, " that you have em- " braced the mistake that has arisen on the form " adopted by Lord Chesterfield, in his Advice to " his Son, to avoid the vulgar manner of pronounc- " ing this word amongst others; a mistake, which " is the more likely to prove fatal, as it has been " adopted and confirmed by one of our latest and " best orthoepists, a man of talents, erudition, and

* Obleege.

† *ei*, that is, *i* long—*ai* will not express *i* long, without explanation, on account of the variety of the sounds of *a*.

" indefatigable industry, to whose labours the pub-
" lic are greatly indebted*. But, in spite of the
" enthusiasm produced by authority, I am not for
" erring with Plato: in my opinion, Lord Chester-
" field, in the letter alluded to, meant to stamp vul-
" garity on the pronunciation of the *i* long.—
" 'Even his pronunciation of proper words,' says his
" Lordship, speaking of a man deficient in good breed-
" ing, 'carries the mark of the beast along with it.
" 'He calls the earth, *yearth;* he is *obleiged*, not
" '*obliged* to you.'—The letters *ei* appear to me to
" mark the vulgar long *i;* for *no other diphthong* so
" unequivocally expresses it. Lord Chesterfield
" was not writing with the precision of later ortho-
" epists, and naturally took a diphthong which was
" susceptible of the sound, as in *height*, though its
" general sound be *a*, as in *vein*. Had he meant
" the reverse, would he have passed over *ee*, and *ie*,
" to pitch upon *ei?* impossible. But a still stronger
" argument is, that though the letters to his son
" were written at least twenty years before they
" were published, the alteration of the word did not
" begin to take place till a considerable time after
" his Lordship's death: so that his Lordship's ex-
" ample, if he gave such an example, had no influ-
" ence on polite language, though he was univer-
" sally esteemed one of the most refined and most
" eloquent speakers of the age: and notwithstand-
" ing the concurrent authority of the best poet of
" that period, the alteration of the proper and ori-
" ginal pronunciation of the word has been lately
" begun, on a supposed discovery, that to mark the
" sound of long *e*, such a man as Lord Chesterfield
" would use the diphthong *ei*, rather than *ee*, or *ie*.
" As some of the best speakers in parliament, and

* Mr. Walker, author of a Critical Pronouncing Dictionary.

"many accomplished persons in the first circles "persevere in the original sound, the word has per- "haps some chance yet, notwithstanding the pro- "nunciation against which Lord Chesterfield I am "confident intended to protest has been so widely "diffused, and though it is even fostered on the "stage."—"There is muckle sense in what you noo "say, Maister Aubrey," said the Scotch gentle- man; "for aw the warld maun say *obleege*, unless "they go entire beside ilka rule of polite pronun- "ciation—to be sure, aw the warld maun say *ob- "leege*."

This national support drew a smile from Aubrey, and created a general laugh, in the middle of which Colonel Spicer, in his riding clothes, made his ap- pearance at the bottom of the room. On entering, he raised his glass to his eye to see, less distinctly, through it the objects he had seen perfectly well without it—it was therefore no sooner raised than dropped, and he darted forward to the Aubreys. The Colonel assured Aubrey of Arthur being well, and, with Rowley, in good hands, while with his arch eye, he bestowed painful admiration on Emily. "He gave me a letter for you, which I find I left "in another coat pocket; but I have told my man "to open my portmanteau, and bring it immedi- "ately." He made earnest apologies for his dress, and the lateness of his appearance, declaring, that the latter was the cause of the former, as he was too impatient to join the party to lose a moment in making his toilette. After accounting for leaving Warwick too late to be sooner at Mariton, he said, he must quit them for a moment, to go and make his apologies to his Lady-Mother and the company; then giving them the Spicer nod, and mechanically using his glass, he walked away to the sopha. While he was going through the ceremonies that drew him

from the Aubreys, a servant brought in Arthur's letter, which Aubrey put into his pocket, to be read at home, being doubly satisfied in Mr. Rowley's stay with his son, and in the Colonel's leaving him. The servant went forward and delivered a message to Mrs. Spicer, who ordered him to throw the doors open; and rising soon after, led the way to the concert-room, which was on the opposite side of the antichamber.

Several professional performers were tuning their instruments to the piano, at which sat Mr. Moreton the organist of Mariton; for, however partial the Colonel was to his sister Eudoxia in other respects, he always preferred having the piano under the direction of Mr. Moreton in the crashes at Spicer-hall. The Colonel had a just ear, and some taste in music, and for a gentleman he played well on the violoncello. The company being seated, a concerto of Haydn's was performed, in the execution of which there was nothing so remarkable as the audible counting of time, the perpetual recurring *one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four,* of the Honourable Billy Spicer, who leaned over his stand to keep his eyes steadily on his book, and worked at his tenor so laboriously that big drops bubbled on his temples, and small streams washed the powder from his hair down his cheeks. After the concerto, Col. Spicer put Mrs. Aubrey in mind of her promise to sing a duet with him, which she did without hesitation, to the delight of the whole company, Miss Spicer excepted, from whose bosom envy now banished every degree of pleasure, and who, like a school-miss, strove to conceal her pain by abrupt giggling. When called upon by Mrs. Aubrey to favour the company with a song, she attempted to excuse herself, even resisting one of Mrs. Spicer's emphatic looks, till Col. Spicer

entreated she would sing "Angels ever bright and "fair," protesting that she sung it better than—Here the Colonel's voice failed, or dropped so low, that the comparison was lost; but she heard enough to draw her forth, and she took Mr. Moreton's seat at the piano, requesting her brother at the same time not to let any of the other instruments join. Accordingly, having the management of the accompaniment entirely to herself, she went through the song with confidence and success. She received great applause, and particularly from Emily Aubrey, on whom she found herself obliged to call, in consequence of a hint from her brother. Finding it unavoidable, she determined to mortify her, by compelling her to sing the song which she remembered that Emily attempted in vain the first day she saw her. She had no doubt but her vanity would again induce her to try it, and she was equally confident that she would disgrace herself. She requested to hear "The Soldier tired of War's "Alarms." Emily, recollecting her father's observation to Arthur, excused herself, till Aubrey, perceiving the vile motive of the request, pressed her arm, saying, "Try, Emily, try to oblige Miss "Spicer;" on which she consented, and the delighted Eudoxia returned to her seat, anticipating her triumph over the daughter at least.

Emily's voice had been gradually gaining strength for some years, and had now attained a roundness, flexibility, and compass, equal to her mother's. Regular practice had so familiarized her ear to harmony, that it was indifferent to her whether she accompanied herself or were accompanied, whether the accompaniment were executed on a single instrument, or supported by a band, and knowing Mr. Moreton's taste, she paid him the compliment of begging him to take the piano. "Shall we all

" take our parts ?" said Col. Spicer to Emily. The beautiful blue eyes of Emily turned to her father, to know how far he was inclined to punish Miss Spicer, and half asked his mercy; but he now thought punishment mercy, and he answered, " By all " means, Colonel, the chief beauty of this song " arises from the accompaniments." Better and better, thought Miss Spicer, who, during the whole symphony, sat swelling with expectation. The lovely Emily standing by the piano, and facing the company, fell in with the instruments when they came to the song, with a just taste and perfect harmony, and, the performers keeping under her voice, she gave the first part in the finest style. Attention and admiration pursued every note. Emily's form, and the emanation of soul from her countenance, heightened the pleasure she spread through the room, and Mrs. Spicer herself concluded one of her emphatic looks at Gosling, with an equally emphatic *hah!* at the end of the strain. Meanwhile, poor Eudoxia was suffering the agonies of that passion, which may be truly called diabolical, as it was the origin of the devil: envy had blown up its fire in her heart, and the unexpected disappointment she experienced, setting her blood in violent motion, the circulation of it was suddenly stopped by the confinement of the whalebone ligature about her stomach; and she screamed, and fell into fits, just as Emily had begun the second strain. The lovely songster immediately ceased singing, the company all rose, and a scene of confusion followed. Mrs. Spicer hurried to her darling child; salts, harts-horn, and cold water were resorted to without effect. It was found necessary to loosen her bandages, and the gentlemen were requested to withdraw. The dangerous whalebone being removed, a free circulation of the blood again took place, and

Miss Spicer gradually recovered. Mrs. Aubrey, being near her, though she was not at a loss to guess the real cause of the sudden fit, inveighed against the injurious fashion of squeezing any part of the body, by means of unyielding cases, into a smaller compass than was ever intended by nature. Miss Spicer, glad of the opportunity of saddling fashion with the effects of envy, assented to Mrs. Aubrey's remarks, saying, she wondered that she ever wore such stays, as she did not need them. Her real malady, however, returning with her recollection, she declared she was too ill to bear the music any more. This declaration, with the emphatic anxiety shown by Mrs. Spicer, put an end to the concert, and the company soon after retired, to the great mortification of the Colonel, whose admiration of Emily had risen to ecstacy, and to the dismay of the Honourable Billy Spicer, who was never so conscious of shining as when he was counting his bars; one, two, three, four.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A little family chat on the absurdity of private set meetings to display talents—A hint on the object of reading to others, and the danger of emulation—Arthur's excursion —Col. Spicer in love—An extraordinary visitor at the parsonage.

As it was not late when Mrs. Spicer's party broke up, the Aubreys got home before their usual hour of retiring to rest, and they spent the remainder of the evening in a conversation naturally resulting from the *conversazione* and concert at Spicer-hall.

"I had a very different idea of a *conversazione*," said Emily, "to that raised by Mrs. Spicer's; I "thought that some agreeable subject was to be "started, to which the attention of every one of the "company was to be given, and that all might "express their sentiments without formally entering "into deep and serious arguments."—"Emily," said Mrs. Aubrey, "thought it was only a rational con-"versation."—"It was no bad idea," said Aubrey, "for if people in general meet to talk only on the "most frivolous, reiterated, exhausted topics, and "to play at cards, the meeting of a party for the pur-"pose of rational conversation would deserve the "name. But the truth is, that affectation spoils "every thing; both the term and the meeting are "affected: they arrogate openly a superiority of "intellectual entertainment, which they seldom jus-"tify, and which is a thousand times more gratifying "when it appears to be the unpremeditated result of "a meeting of sensible friends. One friend may "desire another to come and converse on elevated "subjects: or a man, in making a party, may, in his "invitation anticipate the pleasure he proposes for "his friends by observing, that such and such well-"informed persons, wits, and convivial companions "will be present; but general invitations to a formal "display of each individual's portion of knowledge "and eloquence are absurd, and generally dis-"appoint those who attend."—"At the *conversa-"ziones* I have been at," said Mrs. Aubrey, "I "have observed nothing very different from Mrs. "Spicer's, except poor John Gilpin; for, knots of "men plant themselves at several corners of the "rooms, and talk over the usual politics; some "learned man gets an audience of several of his "particular acquaintance, while the mass of the "company resort to the common occurrences of

" the day; to the events of a ride, to dress, and " public places, topics very well for chat, but ren- " dered ridiculous by a solemn title."—" That is " the misfortune of it," said Aubrey; " things " become ridiculous by the mode of treating them. " Can any thing, for instance, be more agreeable " than a party of friends where one reads to the " others, and observations are made on the topics " that arise from the subjects read? But let in " vanity; see one take up a book, not to amuse, " not to instruct; but to excite admiration, and " solely to show fine reading; pleasure flies: " instead of enjoying the author, we wonder at the " reader, either for his skill or his assurance: but " the object of reading is lost."—" But to please in " reading," said Emily, " it is necessary to read well." —"Certainly," replied Aubrey, " but it should form " no part of the reader's view; and the idea of it " ought to be kept from the mind of the hearers, " whose admiration must be preceded by delight, " or it will be accompanied with disgust."— " I felt very much for poor Mrs. Spicer," said Ar- thurina.—" So did I," said Mrs. Aubrey, " till she " was so ludicrously delighted with herself."— " The selfish passions," said Aubrey, " are na- " turally destructive of the pleasures of soci- " ety. Where people meet to emulate, and to " observe others for the purpose of feeling supe- " riority, rather than for that of exchanging gra- " tification, envy takes the place of the social spring, " and demons only can enjoy the scene."—" Poor " Eudoxia!" cried Arthurina; " what a pop her " stays gave, when Mrs. Spicer cut the lace!"— " Envy," said Aubrey, " is the most odious of the " passions; so odious that, in my mind, not even the " affection of a father can overlook it. I am sure, " girls, dear as you are to me, that I could love

" neither of you, if I discovered it in your hearts."— " It is so unnatural," said Emily, who judged from her own nature :—" the nearer any one is perfect, the " more we should delight in them, I think. What " is a proficiency in music, compared to the excel- " lence of the understanding and of the heart? Can " there be any thing more amiable than the Cam- " bridges? Who could envy them? Does not the " thought of them make you happy, Arthurina?"— " I think them very handsome and very clever," re- plied Arthurina; " and I like them very much. And " as for Miss Spicer, I really feel unhappy that she " should make herself such a fool."—" God bless " you! my girls!" exclaimed Aubrey, " you make " my heart glow, in bringing to my mind the maxim " of an amiable philosopher *, who says: ' Let the " unhappiness you feel at another's errors, and the " happiness you enjoy in their perfections, be the " measure of your progress in wisdom and virtue.'" This was unsophisticated praise; and the glow that Aubrey felt diffused itself through the bosoms of his beloved girls, and charmed the heart of their mother.

After this conversation Aubrey opened Arthur's letter, which had not been forgotten, but having heard that he was well, and expecting nothing more than a few lines to prevent uneasiness, he did not think it necessary to interrupt the con- versation by reading it sooner. It was as follows:

" My dear Sir,

" Though I am extremely pleased with Warwick, " the country around it, and particularly with the " company I have met, I should not yield to Mr. " Rowley's request of suffering Col. Spicer to return

* Lavater.

" without me, if I thought it would cause any un-
" easiness at the parsonage; but I am persuaded
" you will have no objection to my consenting to a
" plan proposed by Mr. Rowley, of spending a day
" or two at Stratford. We shall return here, where
" I hope to find a letter from you. With Warwick,
" and the adjacent country, you are well acquaint-
" ed; I shall therefore reserve the subject for con-
" versation, and devote my letter to other topics.

" You will be surprised to hear of my having
" passed a very agreeable day in company with one
" of your old friends; no other than Mr. Elton. I
" met him at the ball, and though I had not seen
" him for some years, remembered him immediate-
" ly. He did not at first know me, for he did not
" see me when he was last in town; but, on hearing
" my name, he accosted me with all the old friendly
" heartiness with which he used to notice me as a
" boy. I was a little surprised, when I recollected
" the affair of the Winfields, at the ease with which
" he spoke to me; but I did not think it my part to
" assume a serious look, or to appear conscious of
" what had passed between you and him. He is in
" the best company here, and resides occasionally
" at Warwick, but is not settled. He has been
" here these last six weeks, lives in private lodgings,
" has saddle-horses, his groom, and a gig. He en-
" tertains too, and is really an agreeable and capti-
" vating companion. He asked most kindly for you,
" and expressed himself in such terms respecting
" you, that, added to his natural attractions, I felt
" myself very much pleased with him. He says he
" did not know of your being at Mariton, or he
" would have come over to see the family; and that
" he certainly will soon. I wish he may, and ex-
" plain to your satisfaction the circumstance of his
" leaving you; for he is so prepossessing, that few

" things could give me more pleasure than his re-
" trieving your good opinion and Mr. Cowper's.

" If you are surprised at my meeting with Mr. El-
" ton, I think you will be no less so when I tell you
" who was one of my partners at the ball. My mo-
" ther will laugh, I know, to think that her son,
" born nineteen years ago in the Cambridgeshire
" cottage, so celebrated in the archives of Aubrey,
" should be now dancing at Warwick with the Right
" Honourable Lady Sudley. That same lord must
" always have had great taste. Her ladyship is very
" handsome, and dances admirably. My time has
" been very agreeably spent; I only wish you were
" all with me. Pray let me hear from you immedi-
" ately; and give my love to my mother, my sisters,
" and Arthur-William. May every blessing attend
" you, my dear Sir, is the prayer of

" Your affectionate son,

" ARTHUR AUBREY.

" P. S. Remember me kindly to 'Sbidlikins and
" Cæsar."

The contents of Arthur's letter astonished the whole group; for Aubrey had no secrets to which his children were not admitted; they all knew the anecdote respecting Elton, and the adventures of Lord Sudley at Martha's cottage. Mrs. Aubrey had never met with the latter after his flight across the fields from the country people; and his conduct was only detailed in remembrance of Aubrey's successful plan and Cæsar's virtue. The family, however, had often heard him mentioned, and well remembered his marriage with a lady much younger than himself being announced in the newspapers about six years before; but, as they never took the trouble to trace his lordship's course, they knew not what had become of him. As Arthur did not men-

tion him, they imagined he was not at the ball, and that he had not seen him. As for Elton, Aubrey's feelings in a degree corresponded with Arthur's; he wished he could be retrieved: but, from the conversation he had had with Mr. Cowper, he was convinced that it was a hopeless case; and that conviction was now farther confirmed by the figure he was making at Warwick. Aubrey, however, had no fear of Arthur; and, pleased that his excursion proved so agreeable, he wrote next morning to give his consent to whatever he and Mr. Rowley determined on.

The impression made on the senses of Colonel Spicer by the figure and voice of Emily had fastened on his imagination, and kept him awake all night. He rose early; and, as soon as decency would allow, called at the parsonage to apologize for Eudoxia's fit, and to express his mortification at the interruption of the song, which had charmed him so much. Emily, at his request, sang it for him, accompanying herself; and unconsciously completed the conquest of the preceding evening. He protracted his visit long beyond the usual limits, paid marked attention to the object of his admiration, whom he never ceased ogling with his arch eye; agreed with Aubrey that swearing was a criminal habit; assured Mrs. Aubrey that his heart was formed for constancy; and never once thought that he was less agreeable to the company than to himself, or that he could be considered as encroaching on time.

The family began to miss Arthur, and not a day passed but they wished his return; which another letter from him appointed for the following Saturday. Meanwhile Col. Spicer's attention increased; he watched the motions of the Aubreys, and contrived to meet them in their rambles. On the day fixed, Arthur returned. He gave an account, with

great animation, of all that he had seen, expressed the pleasure he had enjoyed, and particularly the delight he had felt in his trip to Stratford. Emily then asked him if he had seen Lord Sudley? "Oh, "no," said he; "fortunately he was not in the "country, or I should not have seen his beautiful "seat, or danced with the beautiful Lady Sudley; "for though they are parted, and she is entirely in- "dependent of him, she never comes to Warwick "when he is at Sudley-castle, as she is resolved to "avoid every probability of meeting him. It seems "they agreed to a separation in less than a year "after they married. She openly detests him, and "her detestation is supported by that of all the "country. He is in a very ill state of health, and "is at present in London consulting physicians. "Lady Sudley talked so highly of the beauties of "his seat, that I had a great desire to see it, and Mr. "Rowley accompanied me."—"Whereabouts is "it?" said Arthurina.—"Between Warwick and "Stratford," said he, "a little to the left of the "high road, from which the house appears at a dis- "tance in the midst of lofty trees. It is delightfully "situated on the Avon, and answered the expecta- "tion raised by Lady Sudley's description. The "grounds are supported in the finest order, and his "pride in it is the only rational delight he is allowed "to have."—"And where does Lady Sudley live?" said Emily.—"She has a pretty place at Allesley, "near Coventry, but often stays at Warwick." Having given a full account of his excursion, Arthur, in his turn, inquired how the family had spent their time, and what pleasure they had had at the *conversazione* and concert at Spicer-hall. His mother gave him a history of the ludicrous reading of John Gilpin; Emily described the entrance of the Right Hon. Colonel Bob; and Arthurina made him

laugh at Billy's one, two, three, four, and the pop of Eudoxia's stays: but he was most delighted with Miss Spicer's compelling Emily to sing "*The soldier tired of war's alarms.*"

The return of Arthur put every thing in its usual train at the parsonage; study and amusement filled up the time, temperance and rambling supplied health, and months flowed away with the even joy of common life. Col. Spicer was oftener and longer at Spicer-hall, and was more and more assiduous as the summer advanced in his endeavours to make an impression on Emily, who only waited his proposal to dismiss him entirely. Arthur made frequent trips to Warwick, to cultivate a friendship he had formed there; and Aubrey, after a considerable perseverance in private admonition, desisted from fighting the windmill, submitted to the repulse of self-insufficiency, interchanged the common civilities with his parishioners, felt the value of his existence, and banished every care.

One morning, about three weeks after Arthur's first excursion to Warwick, as Aubrey went into the study, he saw from the window a servant in livery on horseback ring at the gate, and immediately after a handsome gig drive up, in which was a gentleman, whom at the first glance he knew to be Mr. Elton. In spite of his message by Arthur, no apparition could have surprised him more; and, so tender was his heart towards others, he trembled for the painful situation in which Elton seemed to place himself by this visit. Before he was admitted, therefore, Aubrey desired Arthur to leave him, and to take care that none of the family came to the study. Elton entered with a smiling countenance and an easy gait: as he advanced, he put out his hand, which it was not in Aubrey's nature to reject, and thus accosted him:—"After what passed in town, my dear Aubrey, you

" would have been surprised at this visit, had not
" my message by Arthur prepared you for it. You
" must have thought ill of me, I know you must;
" not only appearances, but reality, was against me;
" and, whatever your opinion was, I excuse it from
" my soul, for I deserved it. I have always re-
" proached myself for not calling in Albemarle-
" street as soon as I left Carey-street; but the hurry
" of business, and some other circumstances, press-
" ed so much, that, faith! I thought of nothing but
" escaping from London. Do not judge of my
" friendship by what happened then, but by the
" motives that bring me to you now." Here Au-
brey's feelings underwent a change from the morbid
tenderness that quivered at the sufferings of a guilty
mind, to an incipient resentment at a second at-
tempt of duping him, which he thought he per-
ceived in the drift of Elton's last expression. He
fixed his eyes on him, prepared for the creation of
another Winfield. " My uncle Trevor is dead,"
proceeded Elton: " you knew my uncle Trevor?"
—" I barely remember him," replied Aubrey.—
" You must recollect," continued Elton, " my talk-
" ing to you of old Tom Trevor, the miser, my ma-
" ternal uncle, from whom I could never extract a
" shilling while he lived."—" I hope," said Aubrey,
" that dying he has left you his fortune."—" Not
" exactly that," replied Elton; " the penurious
" wretch was appalled at the opposite disposition of
" my character, and was still more terrified at the
" thought of bequeathing, than of giving away his
" money while alive."—Where is this tale to end!
thought Aubrey. " Fortunately," continued Elton,
" the old fool had taken it into his head that he
" should die as soon as he executed his will, and he
" never could prevail upon himself to make one;
" the consequence was, that he died intestate, and,

" as his heir, I inherit every shilling of his pro-
" perty."

This was a very different conclusion from what Aubrey expected: resentment sunk, and he sincerely and heartily congratulated Elton on his good fortune. " I trust," said he, " that he died rich." —" Moderately," replied Elton; " I do not yet " precisely know the extent; for he only died last " winter, and some of his money, I fear, is not very " safe, being on usurious contracts; but I have no " doubt I shall do very well, if I can manage at " first." This remark revived Aubrey's suspicions, and again prepared him for some attempt to abuse his credulity. " I suppose," proceeded Elton, " that, in the end, I may come in for about seven " hundred a-year, no more: but that, with care, " will soon remove my difficulties, and set me up " again. You see I am prudent, for I live in lodg-
" ings, as Arthur must have told you; I have only " a man-servant and a couple of horses, and I give " my friends an occasional dinner. I am determin-
" ed not to exceed this plan till my affairs are per-
" fectly arranged." Aubrey smiled, and applauded his determination. " They are in a good train," continued Elton; " I have already been able to li-
" quidate some heavy claims upon me; but nothing " gives me so much pleasure as to be able to con-
" vince you that, though I was compelled to hurry " from town at a moment when I was in possession " of a check, the balance of which ought to have " been instantly paid to you, I do not forget it. " Pray, Aubrey, do you forget the irregularity of " the transaction, and let this check on my banker " efface all thoughts of the other." Saying this he took from his pocket-book an order, already written, and presented it to Aubrey. It was drawn for

three hundred pounds on a respectable house in London.

Aubrey was now more surprised than ever, and he could not but yield his heart to a conviction so complete, of the honourable principles, which were only crushed by adverse circumstances, and were ready to raise their heads when the pressure that kept them under was removed. The fabrication of the distress of the Winfields was smoothed away by the severity of the fabricator's own case, and by the triumph of his virtue; and Aubrey would gladly have spared Elton the recollection of it: but, of the three hundred pounds, he had sent thirty on his own account to the Winfields; and, to take it back, was awkward; he, therefore, gently hinted that the draft was for more than he had a right to by thirty pounds. "Oh! as to that," said Elton, "the Winfields—" He stopped, and looked full in Aubrey's face. The manner of speaking the name, and the look that followed, were ambiguous; it was not easy to tell whether Elton meant to abide by the reality of the existence of the distressed family, or to be directed, if necessary, by the cast of Aubrey's countenance, to a confession of their non-entity. To be detected in a falsehood, however, was at all events to be avoided; and, after a very short pause, he proceeded: "The Winfields—; nay prithee, Aubrey, forget "the Winfields, and think it enough that the mo- "ney, the whole of the money, was applied to the "relief of distress; no part of it is now wanted, and "the whole again is yours."

Aubrey, delighted at this proof of Elton's return to virtue, said not a word that could give him pain, but assured him of his attachment, and begged to see him frequently at the parsonage. He pressed him to dine with him that day; which he did:

and the family being previously prepossessed in his favour, on being made acquainted by Aubrey with what had passed, a pleasant afternoon was spent in the company of Elton, who made himself very agreeable to Mrs. Aubrey and the girls, confirmed his impression on Arthur, and won Arthur-William's heart. Aubrey immediately forwarded the draft to Charles Sensitive, insisting on his appropriating it for Jacob's wife, and putting him in mind of his promise to visit Mariton. The draft was regularly honoured; and Charles, keeping the money to gratify his friend, renewed his engagement to spend some time with him in the autumn.

CHAPTER XXXV.

New ghosts at the castle—A visit to Leicester—Happiness of the Aubreys—Arthur Aubrey writes to Mr. Cowper.

The tradition of the old castle being haunted, which had contributed to render the spot on which the ruins stood more solitary, had ceased to be so much attended to since the arrival of the Aubreys; for the path along the river, and thence to the unbeaten heights, was a favourite walk with them; and their example had induced others to rove at times to the ruins. It was, however, revived in the course of the summer, and, before the end of August, the belief grew so strong, that the environs of the castle became a greater solitude than ever; for the more it had been frequented, the less had it attracted the Aubreys, who found other walks.

As the report gained ground it reached Aubrey's ears, and he thought proper to discountenance seriously the idle tales which were propagated: he not

only preached publicly on the absurdity of crediting general and useless breaches of the laws of nature, but he talked privately with the people, and endeavoured to shame them out of their credulity, by ascribing all such appearances as they spoke of to the force of imagination. There were more than one, however, who declared positively that they had lately seen strange figures moving about the ruins at dusk; and one man went so far as to say, he had seen the figure of a woman all on fire sink into the earth. The pertinacity of these persons made Aubrey at first suspect that some people had taken it into their heads to play tricks on the Mariton clowns, in consequence of the ghostly tradition; and he watched the ruins for several weeks; but nothing appearing to justify the suspicion, he concluded that the tales originated in the illusions of fancy combined with ignorance, and despaired of eradicating the prejudice.

Previous to the time appointed by Sensitive for his visit to the parsonage, the Aubreys, all but Arthur, who went into Warwickshire, made an excursion to Leicester, to see their venerable friend, Dr. Searle, and the amiable Mrs. Searle and Amelia. They were received with great affection. The worthy old man was still cheerful, and possessed his faculties; but Aubrey thought he perceived a considerable change in the lines of his face, and he lamented it sincerely. After spending an agreeable week at Leicester, they would fain have taken Amelia back with them to Mariton, but her mother could not spare her. "My uncle," said she to Mrs. Aubrey, "is evidently breaking, and daily requires more attention; Amelia is my right hand; I should be at "a great loss without her. You must come to us "again soon; my uncle seems happier in your so-"ciety than in any other, and he continually speaks

" of Mr. Aubrey with uncommon warmth of affec-
" tion." Aubrey promised another visit as soon as his friend Sensitive left Mariton; and the family taking leave, went into the old coach, and proceeded towards home. On the way, Mrs. Aubrey and the girls concurred with Aubrey in opinion respecting the visible decay of Dr. Searle, and spoke of him with love, esteem, and regret. They were silent for some time after, till Aubrey, pressing Mrs. Aubrey's hand, broke the silence by the following reflections:—" What a happy life do we lead! my
" dear Emily: What a blessing has our misfor-
" tune proved to us! I have been snatched from
" years of languid ease, from thoughtless repetitions
" of frivolous engagements, and roused to the per-
" formance of the sacred duties of my profession.
" Our house is comfortable, our neighbours atten-
" tive and kind, our children virtuous, amiable, and
" united." Emily and Arthurina kissed each one of his hands: " Arthur is so sensible, so prudent, so
" candid, so formed to make friends! Then the
" prospect I have of enabling him to pursue the
" studies proper for the profession he may choose.
" My heart is light, my Emily; I am the happiest
" of men." Thus, forgetting all that was sinister, and gratefully alive to the real happiness in his possession, Aubrey exulted in his situation: his wife and daughters participated in his feelings, and they drew up to the parsonage with as much delight as they had ever experienced in arriving at Aubrey-hall.

Cæsar, whom they had not thought proper to carry to Leicester, came out to open the carriage-door. His face did not wear the smile with which he was accustomed to meet his master and mistress. Aubrey observed the want of it: " Cæsar," said he, " where is Arthur?"—" At home, Sir,"

replied Cæsar, averting his eye from his master's.—"At home, and not come to meet us! What's the "matter?"—"Have patience, massa," said Cæsar, "Mass Arthur not very well." The alarm produced by this information soon cleared the coach: Aubrey, followed by Mrs. Aubrey and the girls, rushed into the hall, where they met Mrs. Miller, who begged them, for God's sake, to be calm, before they attempted to see Arthur. "But will nobody tell me "what is the matter with him?" cried Mrs. Aubrey, in great agitation.—"He was seized last night with "a fever," said Mrs. Miller, "which has been increasing ever since; he is delirious at times, and "Mr. Browne says he must be kept very quiet."—"Oh, my child!" cried Mrs. Aubrey: "where is "Mr. Browne? Has any body else seen him? Send "for Mr. Browne directly."—"Pray, my mistress," said Cæsar, "pray, Miss Emily, pray, Miss Arthurina, go, stop in the parlour till Mr. Browne come "to you: he 'long wid Mass Arthur now. Go, Mrs. "Miller, go up, send him down."

While Mrs. Miller was gone, Cæsar informed Aubrey, that Arthur came home on the morning of the preceding day; that he seemed extremely uneasy, walked all the morning up and down the parlour, ate no dinner, wrote a letter in the afternoon, tore it, wrote another, and tore that, drank several glasses of water, and at last complained of being feverish. "He put his hand on mine," said Cæsar, "and ask me if he not very hot. I was frightened, and went directly for Mr. Browne, widout "tell him I was going." As Cæsar was speaking, Mr. Browne came into the room. The distracted family flew round him. "Let me beg you to be "composed," said he.—"Is he in danger?"—"He "will be in great danger," replied Mr. Browne, "if he sees any of you agitated. When I saw him

" yesterday, I imagined, from his account, that the " fever was the consequence of violent exercise: " I therefore bled him, and hoped a night's rest, as- " sisted with the medicine I gave him, would have " got it under; but, when I saw him this morning, " I determined without delay to call in Doctor Mur- " ray."—" Oh! my child!" cried Mrs. Aubrey.— " I dispatched an express to Litchfield," continued Mr. Browne, " and I have been expecting him " this hour past."—" You think he is in danger, " then?"—" Diseases are all more or less danger- " ous," replied the apothecary; " but, I trust, that " this will not baffle the skill of Dr. Murray."— " May I not go up to his room?" cried his mother, with a distracted countenance.—" I advise you to " wait a little," said he: " his imagination wan- " ders; your appearing may make him more deli- " rious: stay, and hear what the doctor says." With the most anxious reluctance did Mrs. Aubrey follow the advice of Mr. Browne, whom she begged to go and sit with Arthur till the physician came.

He instantly complied; and Cæsar hearing him go, returned to the parlour, to share the misery of the family. " Massa!" said he, " it long time " since I think something ail Mass Arthur. He ne- " ver show his uneasiness before you, my mistress, " or the young ladies; but, when he alone, he me- " lancholy, and sometimes tears run down his " cheeks." This information was a thunder-bolt to Aubrey. " Is it possible!" exclaimed he, " is it " possible that there is any thing on his mind " which he would conceal from me! Has he " withdrawn his confidence from me! that confi- " dence, that candour which we prize so much, " on which our happiness is built? Oh! my son! " my son! what demon has been able to shut a " heart so pure, so transparent!"—" Oh! my dear

" papa!" cried Emily, bursting into tears, " it can-
" not be; it is some mistake: indeed, Cæsar, there
" is some mistake." Arthurina's heart was too much predisposed to sympathy to resist the contagion of Emily's tears: without speaking, she reclined her head on Aubrey's neck, and wept bitterly. Mrs. Aubrey, her elbow resting on the table, and her hand covering her eyes, suffered the keenest agonies of imagination. Arthur-William sat on a low stool at her knee, and hid his face in her lap. A silence of agony ensued: it lasted till the sounds of carriage-wheels and the ringing of the gate-bell, announced the physician. By Mr. Browne's desire he was shown into the study, where he attended him to communicate his observations, and the steps he had taken. They then joined the family. Dr. Murray was as humane and tender as he was skilful. He entered the parlour with an encouraging look, assured them that Mr. Browne had said nothing to make him despair, and hoped that he should bring them a favourable account. He was then conducted to his patient's room by Mr. Browne, whom Aubrey followed, and who, at the door, prepared him to find his son in a state of delirium. Mrs. Miller was sitting at the bed-side. Arthur was very restless, rolled his eyes from side to side, and talked incoherently; he was insensible to all that passed. While Dr. Murray approached and felt his hand, Aubrey threw himself upon his knees at the foot of the bed, and wept and prayed like a father. " The
" love I feel for my children is thy will, oh heavenly
" Parent! Thou gavest them to me! Thou knowest
" how watchful I have been of the trust . . ."—
" Poor man!" said Dr. Murray, " I feel for you;
" but moderate your emotions for the sake of the
" objects of your affection: the fever runs very high,
" but still I do not despair getting him through it:

" the issue lies with Providence, and I hope I shall " be a successful instrument in his hands." Aubrey had never in the whole course of his life been so agitated before. He rose, thanked Dr. Murray, wiped away his tears, and said he feared that the cause of Arthur's malady lay deeper than usual; that it was in his mind. " We will talk of that hereafter," replied the doctor; " at present we must endeavour " to reduce the violence of the fever." He then ordered more blood to be taken from his patient, and returned to the parlour to write a prescription. As the case was doubtful, though his fears preponderated, he thought it his part to give hope; and, accordingly, both his conversation and demeanour were adapted to that design. He permitted Mrs. Aubrey to sit up part of the night with her son, on her promising to consider delirium as common to acute fevers, and no particular symptom of danger; and, at her entreaty, he took a bed at the parsonage. Mrs. Miller was sent to take rest, and Nanny supplied her place in Arthur's room, where Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey passed the most miserable night they had ever known in their lives: neither did Emily nor Arthurina close their eyes: they sat up and listened, and prayed, and wept.

In the morning, Dr. Murray found that, notwithstanding the copious bleeding of his patient, the fever had risen; his pulse was still hard and more frequent. He directed Mr. Browne to continue the medicine prescribed, and to take some more blood at noon; and then went off for Litchfield, promising to return at night. It was Sunday, and Aubrey had returned from Leicester to do his duty; but, finding that it would be impossible for him to attend, he had requested Mr. Browne, on his leaving him the evening before, to engage a young clergyman residing at Loughborough to supply his place. The whole

neighbourhood soon heard of Arthur's dangerous state, and the gate of the parsonage was crowded with inquiries. His fever continued to rage; and Dr. Murray, at his return in the evening, could not console the family with an assurance of any favourable change. The parsonage, where happiness seemed to have taken up its abode, presented only scenes of the most poignant distress. Day passed without hope, and night without rest. The struggle between disease and constitution lasted the whole week. Dr. Murray came every day, and generally took his bed in the house. He said and did every thing in his power to comfort and support the Aubreys in this most dreadful trial. The duration of the fever did not fail to alarm himself, and he watched for the crisis of it with the most anxious perseverance, administering all that his skill and experience suggested. At the end of the week he knew a change must take place. He did not quit the house all Saturday and Sunday.

On Sunday night the delirium was higher than ever. His mother, herself nearly exhausted, continued to watch him. Dr. Murray having purposely slept in the day-time, joined her at one o'clock in the morning, when he expected the change. He found her standing at the bed-side, the chair on which she had been sitting behind her, her arms folded, her eyes fixed upon her son, who lay perfectly still, breathing hard, but more freely. The doctor, in a whisper, begged she would leave the room. "Then you think it is all over!" cried she: "no, I will stay till the last moment by him." —"Hush!" said he; "he sleeps: you know not "the consequence of disturbing him at present: if "you *will* stay, sit down and be quiet." She was silent, and sat down on the chair from which she had risen. Mrs. Miller, who had been sitting at the

head of the bed, gave her seat to Dr. Murray, and removed to another part of the room. A solemn anxious silence ensued, and lasted for four hours. It was soon broad day-light. At five o'clock Arthur turned round, and said, in a composed tone of voice, "Edmund! where are you, Edmund?" His mother would have risen, but Murray's finger restrained her. Arthur's back was turned to the side where they were, and he had thrown his arm over the sheet. Murray felt his pulse, looked at Mrs. Aubrey, and smiled. "He will live!" cried she, starting up; "O God! he will live! My boy will "live! my boy will live!" She darted out of the room, flew to her own chamber, calling Aubrey; and, not finding him there, ran down stairs. She found him with Emily, Arthurina, and Cæsar, in the parlour, where they had been sitting all night; Aubrey on the sopha, his girls by him, each holding a hand, and leaning on his neck; Cæsar on Arthur-William's mahogany stool, his head on his left hand, and his right hand supporting the elbow of his left arm. They flew towards the door—Mrs. Aubrey was too much agitated to speak; and they, expecting the fatal sentence, took it for granted. They stood for a minute gazing at her with horror. She strove in vain to articulate her words, sunk upon the floor, and fainted away.

Dr. Murray came in in the midst of this complicated scene of distress, and having immediately undeceived Aubrey and his daughters, assisted in recovering Mrs. Aubrey, whom they placed upon the sopha. When she revived, Aubrey asked Murray if there were any hope. "Great hope," replied he, "the softness of "his pulse, and the moisture of his skin indicate a fa-"vourable issue. Come, be satisfied and compose your "spirits, unless you have a mind to throw yourselves "into the state from which my patient is escaping."

Convinced by the doctor's manner that there was a great change in Arthur for the better, Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, being worn out by anxiety and watching, consented to take some rest in bed, and to refresh themselves completely before they had any communication with him. When they retired, Aubrey accompanied Dr. Murray back to Arthur's chamber. As they entered, he said, without moving:—"What's o'clock?" Dr. Murray made a sign to Aubrey to go round the bed and answer.—"About six," said Aubrey, obeying the doctor's sign. "Oh, Sir! is it you?" said he; "I thought it was "Edmund Smyth." "How are you, my dear Ar-"thur," said Aubrey, sitting down on the bedside, and taking his hand, which though warm was moist. "Very well, thank you," he replied. "Not very "well," said Aubrey, "but getting well."—"Didn't somebody come in with you?" asked Arthur, turning his head, when, perceiving the shadow of the doctor, he added, "who is that behind "the curtain? Edmund, is it you?" "My dear "boy," cried Aubrey, "be composed, and you "shall see Edmund. You must take care of your-"self, for you have been very ill. Have you any "objection to see Dr. Murray?"—"Certainly not," replied he; "is that the doctor behind the cur-"tain?"—"It is," said Aubrey: on which the doctor came forward, saying, "you must not be "alarmed at seeing a physician in your room; for "you are out of my hands before you knew you "were under them. Now that you are in no dan-"ger whatever, I may venture to tell you, that you "have had a very serious illness." He then shook hands with him, felt his pulse, asked him some questions, and pronounced him convalescent. At the same time he forbade him to exert himself in any way, till he had his permission. Arthur pro-

mised obedience, but harped on Edmund Smyth. "Have I only dreamt it," said he, "or is Edmund "in the house?"—"You have dreamt it, my good "friend," said the doctor. "Should you like to "have him here?" said Aubrey. "Oh! very much "indeed," replied he. "I have had such dreams "about you all, but so much stronger than dreams "in general. I saw——" —"Come, come," said Dr. Murray, "you must not talk so much. We "must leave you; and pray, Mrs. Miller, do not "suffer him to talk." At the mention of Mrs. Miller's name Arthur turned to see her: "'Sbidlikins!" said he, "how are you? Where is my mother? "and——" —"No more, no more:" said the doctor, interrupting him—"lie quiet till I see you "again; and be regular in taking the medicines I "shall order you. I shall see you in the evening." He then left the room, taking Aubrey with him.

His postchaise, which he had ordered the evening before, drove up to the gate as he was going down stairs: but before he set off, he went into the sitting-room to breakfast, which Cæsar, on being made happy by the joyful tidings, had taken care to get ready. Here Dr. Murray, after congratulating Aubrey on the prospect of Arthur's recovery, said; "and now, my good Sir, let me, both as a friend "and as a physician, give you a caution. You told "me that you had reason to believe your son's ill-"ness had a mental cause: I know it, and I will "tell it to you; but you must be prudent, or I pre-"dict, from the sensibility of this youth's tempera-"ment, you will have serious cause of repentance. "When you know the evil, be careful in applying "the remedy. Your son has been seduced——" —"Great God!" exclaimed Aubrey. "For some "time past," continued Dr. Murray, "he has been "engaged with a very beautiful woman, to whom

" he was introduced at Warwick."——" Surely," cried Aubrey, " not with Lady Sudley !"—" Why " not with Lady Sudley, as well as any other lady ?" replied Murray. " Oh ! fool, fool, that I was," exclaimed Aubrey, " to trust him from under my " own care !"—" Nay, nay," said the doctor, " it " is well it's no worse."—" No worse ! What can be " worse than the loss of that candour which was my " glory ? The once limpid stream of truth is made tur- " bid ; I can see no more to the bottom of his soul; " the friendship that subsisted between us is injured. " Vices are linked in a chain; one brings on an- " other : dissimulation attends them all !"—" My " good Sir," said Dr. Murray, " without exculpat- " ing your son, though I think it would not be very " difficult to obtain his pardon from the most scru- " pulous judge, I must observe, that a secret of this " kind must be considered as less criminal than the " divulging of it. After being tempted, the confes- " sion of a crime of this nature was not to be ex- " pected ; was not to be wished for ; for it would, " on reflection, have lowered him even in your opi- " nion. My advice to you is, to appear ignorant of " the matter, and to leave time to work his cure : I " speak as a physician—for health and life may de- " pend upon it. Lady Sudley cannot hold such a " youth long in her chains ; for she has nothing " more than a little personal beauty : her mind is " very deficient, and her passions very strong. I " have known her from her infancy. Lord Sudley, " an emaciated debauchee, married her for her face, " and grew tired of her in a few months. Since " their separation, she is suspected to have led a " loose life, and has but just managed to keep a " footing in society. She has now again made her- " self the subject of the tattle of the day ; and her " amour with your son is fully canvassed both at

" Coventry and Warwick." Aubrey stood aghast. " I had the whole account from a friend, who re- " sides at the former place: nay, even the com- " punctions of your son are no secret; for, though " he is silent, the lady herself has lost her discre- " tion. I really believe this fever has been brought " on by his feelings of remorse conspiring with vio- " lent exercise: but he will recover if you do not " impede his progress. You must, as much as pos- " sible, divert his mind from thoughts that are like- " ly to oppress it." Aubrey thanked the doctor, and, with a sigh, promised to attend to his advice: he then conducted him to his carriage.

Arthur's intrigue, the notoriety of his crime, the breach of candour, sunk deeply into Aubrey's heart; but the love of his son predominated: he resolved for the present to conceal his emotions; and, with the hope of diverting his ideas, and accelerating his recovery, he wrote a pressing solicitation to Mr. Cowper to send Edmund to Mariton.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Progress of Arthur's recovery—Friendship with Edmund Smyth—Cupid lurking beneath a shrub on the bank of a river—Aubrey opens his mind to Edmund—Arrival of a friend—Departure of Arthur and Edmund.

In the course of a few days Arthur was pronounced by Dr. Murray to be out of danger; Mrs. Aubrey and his sisters were suffered to chat in his room, and Arthur-William came and said his lessons to him. But, though he daily gained strength, his cheerfulness kept no pace with his recovery. The engaging smile, that used so often to illume his counte-

nance, did not re-appear: he spoke affectionately, but seriously; and he was more inclined to be thoughtful than talkative. At first Aubrey made some allowance for the state of his nerves, after such an attack as he had suffered; but when he observed that his thoughtfulness increased in the course of his convalescence, he became doubly wretched, and felt the more from being now compelled to disguise his wretchedness under a show of joy. He was more anxious than ever to have Edmund Smyth at the parsonage; and a week having elapsed since he wrote to Mr. Cowper, he was greatly surprised that he had heard nothing of him.

It was not until Arthur had begun to walk from room to room on the same floor with his chamber, and was talking of going down stairs, and into the garden, that Aubrey's suspense was removed by the arrival of Edmund's portmanteau, which had been sent on by a public carriage. The sight of his name on the direction spread joy through the family. Arthur smiled from his heart, and cried, "huzza." The portmanteau was received, but its master did not make his appearance: for two days the Aubreys were in constant expectation of seeing their young friend, and began to be uneasy lest some accident had happened. On the fourth day he arrived, having been three on the road, as he was mounted on one of his uncle's horses. Giving his horse to Cæsar, who opened the gate to him, he hastened to the sitting-room, where he found the whole family. The bashfulness, which at his first interview with them in Albemarle-street, had cast a little rustic awkwardness on his manners, was very much worn off; and the disguise of his figure, under his village drab, was entirely removed, for he was now dressed in clothes which were made while he was in town. The colour of his coat was a high brown, which set

off his face to advantage; and, being well and fashionably made, his person had fair play, and appeared elegant. He wore a white waistcoat, and leather breeches, with boots and spurs. He entered with an ease and grace that surprised and delighted the Aubreys, who received him with great affection, which was returned in a very engaging manner. He accounted for Mr. Cowper's not immediately replying to Aubrey's letter, by telling him that he was not at Eden-bower when it came; and that, as soon as he returned, he thought it better to dispatch the portmanteau than to write. After answering all the kind enquiries made for his uncle, his mother, and sister, "Well, Arthur," said he,—"we always "call you Arthur at Eden-bower—well, my dear "friend, you must make haste and get stout, to re-"turn with me, for my uncle says that I must make "it the preliminary of my stay at Mariton: and he "gives me a full fortnight, if you stipulate to be "quite well at the end of it."—"I am getting round "fast," replied Arthur; "but no stipulation can "be agreeable to me, or any of us, which includes "your leaving Mariton." Aubrey, however, being struck with the advantage that might be reaped from Arthur's visit to Melford, where he would be at a distance from the object and scene of his misfortune, said, "Arthur will be happy to return "with you, I am sure; but meanwhile let us forget "the period of your going." That was soon banished from their thoughts. Edmund was full of spirits, Emily and Arthurina resumed their natural liveliness, and Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey had the happiness of observing the revival of Arthur's smile. In three days after Edmund's arrival, Arthur was able to walk round the garden with him; and before the week was over, he strolled with his sisters and Edmund to the castle ruins.

As soon as it was known that he was well enough to go out, visits of congratulation poured in upon the Aubreys, which Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey managed in general to receive alone, in order that the young folks might not be deprived of their rambles. Among the first visitors were the Spicers; the colonel had made it a point with them, and that they should inform him when the family began to see company, that he might return to Mariton from town, whither he had gone on finding the door of the parsonage shut by Arthur's illness. When Arthur grew stronger, Edmund and he sometimes rode on horseback, that the former might see the country to a greater extent; in these rides the girls were left behind, and the two young men, led by a congeniality of sentiment, formed a friendship of the warmest and noblest kind. Out of their own families neither of them had yet met with any person of either sex who so fully took possession of his heart; the attachment was mutually grateful, and each felt and declared that he could sacrifice his life for the other.

A soul so congenial with Arthur's, could not but be congenial with Emily's also, but to form a similar friendship with his sister was not so easy. In company Edmund delighted to address his conversation to her, but when left by accident alone with her, far from feeling the promptness with which he had declared his sentiments to her brother, he became immediately reserved; his lips were mute, his looks constrained. His silence and embarrassment, however, were more eloquent than words to Emily, whose downcast eye, and sympathetic taciturnity, unconsciously marked the conformity and harmony of their souls. She perceived what he had no idea of betraying; she felt that she was beloved by him. Edmund was not so penetrating; he did not see either into his own heart or hers; and, though he

was not devoid of ambition, he had never once suffered himself to conceive a matrimonial alliance possible, in the situation of life in which he stood; not on account of his entire dependence on his uncle, who was indeed a father to him, but because his mother and sister were combined in that dependence, and his uncle had taught him to consider them as the first objects of the care of his life. He only wished, therefore, to form such a friendship with Emily, as he had formed with her brother, without being aware that it was impossible. But this impossibility was made clear to him by an accident which happened during his stay at Mariton. Emily's handkerchief was blown by the wind out of her hand, as she turned from the river side to pursue the path leading to the castle ruins; and it was caught by a branch of a shrub overhanging one of those deep holes which here and there are formed in the beds of shallow streams. She called out as the handkerchief flew away: Edmund leaned over the bank to reach it; he stretched till he lost his poise, on which he seized the branch to save himself from falling. The branch was brittle, it broke, and he fell with it, handkerchief and all, into the river, which at that place was very deep. Before he reached the water Emily screamed; but when in consequence of the height from which he fell, she saw him sink, her agitation overcame all fear of danger; she clasped her hands, and crying out—"O "save him! save him!" plunged into the river after him. The deep part of the water extended but a little way; and Edmund could swim. He rose on the opposite side as Emily left the bank. He had heard her words, and turned to look at her; he darted towards her, and caught her by the arm, at the instant her lovely agitated face was disappearing. With one hand he supported her above the

surface of the water, and with the other swam towards the side whence she had sprung, but a little lower down the stream, where the bottom was gradually shallower. He encouraged her as he swam, but she was insensible to his encouragement; and when his feet touched the ground, he took her into his arms, and bore her senseless to the bank. The terrified Arthurina, who was by her sister when she plunged into the river, now stood trembling to receive her; and Arthur, who had loitered behind with Arthur-William, to see him make ducks and drakes upon the surface of the stream, hastened up to the spot, followed by his brother. Arthur-William, believing that his sister was drowned, wrung his little hands, wept, and cried out—"What shall "we do? Oh! what shall we do?" Emily's head had not been entirely under water, and her swoon being the consequence of the terror she felt on finding herself sinking, was of short duration. While the little group, sitting or kneeling about her, were looking at her with the greatest anxiety, she revived, and soon recovered sufficient strength to walk back to the parsonage, which was at no great distance, and where she was soon made comfortable by a change of clothes.

Though neither Edmund nor Emily had been in any great danger, this incident made the former acquainted with his own heart. The impulse that had driven Emily into the river might be attributed to other causes than love; nor had he the presumption to conceive that it originated from such an emotion: but it was enough that he had at any rate been the object of her solicitude; that she had thrown herself into the river; that he had saved her from sinking. From that hour he never looked at her but with conscious tenderness; from that hour the images of the scene dwelt upon his mind: the "O save him!"

the angelic figure rapidly descending; Emily supported above the water; Emily in his arms; recurred too frequently to his thoughts to leave him in doubt that she had made an impression which it behoved him to efface. From that hour, too, the reserve of his demeanour, which he had before only felt when they were alone, was constant: he looked at her but in stolen glances; he spoke to her but when silence would have been extraordinary. As Edmund had never been very forward, the change was not visible to Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey, who, after hearing of the accident with retrospective alarm, ended with laughing at it, and ascribing Emily's leap to the movements of terror.

The fortnight allowed to Edmund by his uncle now drew to an end. The art of subduing desire he had learned from necessity, the most successful of masters, under whose tuition Mr. Cowper had placed him from his infancy. Young as he was, habit had confirmed him in the mastery of the passions common in early life. The inutility of regretting the want of unattainable objects matured the virtue of self-denial on occasions where the attainment was only opposed by prudence, the foster-child of necessity. Edmund never formed fruitless wishes, and never cherished imprudent ones. The passion that now assailed his heart was new to him; but, believing it to be both hopeless and imprudent, he resolved not even to form a wish for its gratification, but to banish it immediately from his mind. As nothing was so likely to confirm his resolution as absence, he took an opportunity of requesting Arthur not to oppose their leaving Mariton at the time appointed by Mr. Cowper, and silenced every objection by saying, that when they were at Melford he would give him such reasons as could not fail to satisfy him. Arthur yielded; and his health being

now almost completely re-established, he had reasons of his own for accelerating their departure.

His father and mother too were not without their motives for wishing him in Gloucestershire: Arthur, though pleased with the company of his friend, and joining without reluctance in all amusements proposed, had by no means recovered his former cheerfulness. His mind evidently laboured with its burden; there was a recurring, melancholy pensiveness, which Aubrey was but too sensible was not the remains of his illness; but whether it proceeded from contemplating a renewal of his intercourse with Lady Sudley, or from remorse at the state of insincerity in which he was living at the parsonage, or from both, was not settled in his opinion. It was the constant subject of his conversation with Mrs. Aubrey, when alone with her; and he had determined upon a plan, the success of which was in one of the cases certain, and in the other probable. His resolution was to let the two friends go without delay, as the distance of Melford would be a bar to the communication he feared, and would in all likelihood put an end to a connexion so criminal and so pregnant with misery. He likewise resolved to open his mind freely to Edmund, not only to account for his not urging a continuance of his stay at Mariton, but with a view of regaining Arthur's candour, and relieving his mind of the consciousness of continued insincerity, by showing him not so much the error as the uselessness of it. Within two or three days of the time fixed for Edmund's return, he told him privately that he wished to converse with him alone on a subject that gave him infinite pain, and he requested that he would meet him in the summer-house in the garden in an hour, without giving a hint to Arthur or any one else of their meeting. Edmund, ignorant of the circumstances that had given birth to the

pain alluded to by Aubrey, and conscious of what had been passing in his own heart, was startled at this appointment. He instantly suspected that he had betrayed himself by his looks; and that Emily's father meant, if not to reproach him, at least to warn him against the encouragement of a passion which could never be attended with success.—Wretched in the company of Emily, he retired to his own chamber, where he gave way to the most painful and mortifying reflections, till it was time to attend his appointment.

How surprised and delighted was he to find that Aubrey, far from thinking as he had done, expressed a joy at observing the friendship that had taken root between him and Arthur, and at the reciprocity of affection in all the family; and that the appointment was made to repose in him a confidence of the greatest importance to their happiness! Aubrey expatiated on the felicity he had enjoyed in the candour of Arthur's mind; and contrasting the pangs he suffered in consequence of the duplicity rendered necessary by the conduct of Lady Sudley, deputed to Edmund the office of removing the dreadful necessity. "Chuse a proper opportunity, my dear "young friend," said Aubrey, "to let him know "that I am fully acquainted with the successful ar-"tifices of that abandoned woman; tell him, not to "let an imaginary secret continue to prey upon his "mind; and that all I ask is the relinquishment of "the crime which has involved us in the misery of "veiling our hearts from each other."—"Oh! Sir," replied Edmund, "let me go and speak to him im-"mediately: how can he bear to conceal any thing "from such a father! I saw he was miserable, and "now I know the cause. Oh! let me go and re-"move it instantly."—"No, my dear Edmund," said Aubrey, "you must not be precipitate. I

" know not what the consequence might be if he " were made acquainted with my knowledge of the " circumstance here : but opened to him gently, at a " distance from me, and by a friend so beloved as " you are, I have no fear but all will be well." Edmund yielded, declaring at the same time that he should not be happy till he had completely restored the ease of his friend's mind, by diverting it from brooding over the horror of secrecy. Aubrey pressed his hand, assuring him that he stood in his heart mixed in the group of his own children. The thought raised by this expression affected Edmund to such a degree that he was ready to open his whole soul to Aubrey, but his tongue was unable to obey the pure dictates of his mind, and he recollected himself in time. Having settled the day of departure for the succeeding Monday, they strolled together round the garden, conversing on topics less interesting, and joined the rest of the family.

Aubrey informed them that Edmund persisted in the resolution of setting out at the time his uncle had fixed, and that Monday was the day. Mrs. Aubrey and Arthurina exclaimed against it. Emily faintly said, " So soon !" Arthur declared himself neutral. Arthur-William was a noisy champion for delay. But Aubrey agreeing with Edmund that punctuality was indispensable, as nothing new on the subject had arrived from Mr. Cowper, the affair was settled. A little gloom ensued; it was palest in Emily's face ; nor did it entirely disappear from the parsonage during the remainder of Edmund's stay. On Saturday he accompanied Arthur on a round of visits to take leave ; and every thing was prepared for their departure. The family unanimously insisted on their travelling in Aubrey's gig, as they were afraid Arthur was not yet strong enough to take so long a journey on horseback. It was arranged ac-

cordingly, and a man was hired to ride Edmund's horse.

The party were taking their tea, and talking of Melford, when a loud ringing of the gate bell proclaimed a visitor. "I forgot to tell you," said Arthur, "that Colonel Spicer was expected at Spicer-"hall: perhaps this is he come to take leave of me." "I hope not;" said Emily. The information given by Arthur, and his remark, had brought the figure of the dapper coxcomb into their thoughts, when the door opened, and a very different person appeared. Aubrey flew with open arms to embrace Charles Sensitive. The whole family loved him; and his welcome from every individual of it was most cordial. Charles's fine, open, benevolent countenance, and his slight elegant figure, in plain clothes, gained some additional advantage by supplanting the image of Col. Spicer. The arrival of Sensitive would probably have made an alteration in the time of Arthur and Edmund's departure, had it not been for the occurrences that had taken place. Sensitive himself too urged the benefit that would be derived from change of air: and Aubrey soon had an opportunity of imparting his own reasons to his friend. Arthur regretted going from Mariton just as he was come; and it was not till Sensitive assured him that he meant to make a long stay, and should be at the parsonage when he returned, that he was entirely reconciled to leaving him. At the hour appointed the gig was at the gate; all formality was avoided in the farewell; Edmund concealed his feelings with considerable address; and if, when he kissed his hand as Arthur drove off, the eyes of Emily filled with tears, so did those of Arthurina.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Charles Sensitive—Emily's choice of a confidante—The beauty and blessing of candour—Time agreeably spent—The unexpected fate of Jacob's wife, and the place where she hangs.

The company of Sensitive contributed to dissipate the gloom that had begun to prevail at the parsonage, and which would otherwise have increased on the departure of the lads. Charles's disposition was not of that lively character that perpetually seeks and promotes an incessant flow of gaiety, and if it fail of intenseness, sinks into *ennui*; but was mildly and uniformly cheerful. He was neither loquacious nor taciturn: he seldom laughed, but very often smiled. He was not fond of admiration, but was charmed with affection. His chief objects were to give pleasure, and to prevent pain. When his drawings or paintings were praised, it gave him a lively sensation, but produced not a single spark of vanity; his emotion was delight on creating delight. His heart was the soil of the social passions: if ever there was one completely devoid of the selfish principle, it was Charles Sensitive's. In dispelling the gloom gathering when he arrived, he had no aid from mirth: an even tenour of friendly talk, enjoyment of music, admiration of the scenes around Mariton, the display of his portfolios, in which there was ever something new to be found, and the sketches he made of the striking points that presented themselves in his walks, engaged and gratified his friends, and Arthurina very soon recovered that sprightliness that diffused a spirit of gaiety wherever she was.

Emily continued to think of Edmund: she was

convinced that he loved her, but he had not said a word to entitle her to consider him as her lover. Her own feelings, however, were not in a settled state; she was afraid to trust her heart to her own management, and she resolved to lay it open to her mother. Accordingly she took an opportunity, when Arthurina was copying a landscape under the direction of Sensitive, to stroll round the garden with Mrs. Aubrey, with whom, when they got near the summer-house, she entered into the following conversation:—"Mamma! did any thing uncom-"mon strike you in Edmund's manner?"—"No, "my dear Emily, nothing. Did any thing strike "you?" Emily turned her head and looked in Mrs. Aubrey's face to see if she expected what she wished to say—"You know," replied she, "I al-"ways tell you what I think, right or wrong. Ed-"mund is very amiable; is n't he, mamma?"—"He "is, indeed, my love;" replied her mother. "I "am afraid I am going to be very foolish;" said Emily, "but pray don't laugh at me. I thought he "looked at me and behaved to me in a way I never "observed in any body before; and it ran so much "in my mind, that I could not be easy till I told "you."—"My sweet girl!" said Mrs. Aubrey, "how charming is this frankness of mind! how "happy does it make me to see the pure affection "and friendship I possess in your heart taking "stronger and stronger root. Let us go into the "summer-house and sit down—What you have said, "and the purity of your sentiments, call upon me "to be as ingenuous with you as you are with me."

Having seated themselves, Mrs. Aubrey continued thus: "I need not tell you, my dear Emily, "that the first object of my heart and of your fa-"ther's is the happiness of our children: you ob-"serve it, my love, in all we do and say. You are

" arrived at a period of life when, if you are not put " upon your guard, you may be unexpectedly in- " volved in misery."—" My dear mamma," said Emily, " I know what you mean, and I am upon " my guard; indeed I am: and it is because I would " not be off my guard that I speak to you now." —" You cannot but know," continued her mother, " that I allude to the passion of love, and to mar- " riage. Love, like other passions, my dear Emily, " is a source of happiness or misery, as it is swayed " by good sense or by folly. Nature, in prohibit- " ing our sex to court the other, fairly and kindly " gives us time to call on our understanding to as- " sist us in our conduct. Knowing that we are to " wait to be addressed, nature equally dictates the " complete reserve of our heart, till we are certain " that we are the object of love. Few women, that " are worthy of being loved, are inattentive to this " dictate, and consequently there are few who may " not, if they please, weigh the consequences of " engaging their hearts before they yield to love. " It is, however, in some cases not so easy as in " others, which is the reason that so many impru- " dent matches are formed; for we are too much in- " clined to think we have sufficiently complied with " the law of our nature if we are not the first to " love: but a girl, who is taught to consult her rea- " son in every action of her life, will not be prompt " in yielding her heart to the first overtures of a " passion which she is aware is to make so import- " ant a change in her situation, and to influence " her whole life. Having learned that to render " a marriage happy, virtue, good sense, good hu- " mour, and a competent provision for a family, are " all as indispensable as love; she will ascertain " these foundations of happiness before she places " her affections on any man; before she encourages

"any lover. I am talking of such a girl as my "Emily. You have, I know, captivated Colonel "Spicer; but you will, I am sure, examine whether "he possesses these indispensable qualities or not." —"Dear Mamma!" cried Emily, "it does not re- "quire a thought."—"If it should be likewise the "case with Edmund, you would, I am confident, "no less attend to those points."—"To be sure—" said Emily—"but he is so different from Colonel "Spicer! poor fellow! he only wants a fortune "to——" Mrs. Aubrey perceiving the bias of Emily's mind, interrupted her speech, and proceed- ed thus: "Without taking any particular person "into consideration, I will seize this occasion, Emi- "ly, to tell you freely my mind, and I know I speak "your father's sentiments. There can be no doubt "that a virtuous love, confirmed by a prudent mar- "riage, is the source of great felicity; but, as in the "case of other desirable objects, we must consider "well whether it be attainable before we suffer our- "selves to desire it; for vain wishes are the marks "of a weak mind. There are several very strong "reasons that lead me to advise you and Arthuri- "na, as you grow older, to regard marriage rather "as a dangerous trial, than as a certain means of "happiness: in the first place, let a man be ever so "worthy and amiable, it will not be sufficient with- "out competence; in the next, if he be affluent, no "affluence will be sufficient without worth and ami- "able qualities; and in the third, which comes most "home to your own case, where fortune is all on "one side, a foundation is laid to embitter the mar- "riage state: I do not speak from personal experi- "ence; there are few men with such a heart as "your father's. The loss of his fortune has put it "out of his power to portion you or your sister—" —"Thank God!" cried Emily, "nobody will

" court us for our fortunes."—" Whenever it shall " please God that he should succeed to the Rec- " tory," continued Mrs. Aubrey, " it is his inten- " tion to fund annually a part of his income for the " purpose of making a provision for you and Ar- " thurina; but, as he will have to establish your " brother, and Arthur-William, it is not to be sup- " posed that any thing considerable can be collect- " ed for many years; therefore, my dear girl, I ear- " nestly advise you to consider a happy marriage as " out of the circle of the portion of felicity allotted " to you in this world, and to continue your enjoy- " ment of those resources Providence has merci- " fully reserved for us."—" Believe me, my dear " mamma," said Emily, " I would not leave you " and papa, to marry a king. I do not care at all " about marriage; and, in speaking to you about " Edmund, I never thought of marriage; but I own " to you I thought there was something odd in his " conduct to me: for, at first he was so sociable and " so friendly with me, and looked me full in the " face, whether in company or alone; but soon af- " terwards he never spoke to me, except in com- " pany; and when he looked at me, it was not in " his usual easy way. In short, mamma, it struck " me that he loved me, and you know whatever " comes into my mind, I always ask your opinion " upon it. He does not know what my thoughts " are, or that I am telling them to you, so that there " is no harm."—" My dear Emily," said Mrs. Au- brey, " your candour charms me. I should not " be surprised to find your observation true; but if " it be, depend upon it that Edmund's good sense " will sway him on the occasion: he will examine " his heart, he will perceive the error of indulging " any affection for you but what he might feel for a " sister, and he will banish every other sentiment.

"You know, from Mr. Cowper's history of himself "and the Smyths, that Edmund has no prospect, "but from his own industry; and that he has to as- "sist his uncle in supporting his mother and sister." —"I know it, mamma; and I am sure he has too "good a heart to think of marrying: but I hope he "will continue to love me as a sister, for I have a "very great esteem for him; and Arthur and Ar- "thurina too have both the greatest esteem for "him."—"We all love him," said Mrs. Aubrey, "and there can be no doubt that the friendship "we have formed with him and his uncle will be "lasting; but I am more and more convinced, from "the fresh instance of candour my Emily has now "given me, that she will continue to examine all "her thoughts, and guard her heart against any "prepossession that could possibly tend to embarrass "her way through life, and consequently to afflict "her family."—"Never, never," cried Emily, "never will I knowingly give you any pain: all "the happiness I desire in this world is to see you "and papa happy, and to pass the rest of my life "just as I have done since we came to Mariton." Mrs. Aubrey here put an end to the subject by embracing Emily, and saying that she felt the blessing of having such a daughter. Emily was no less sensible of the blessing of such a mother; she felt delighted and easy in having opened her mind to her; and she was confirmed in the persuasion she had long cherished, that she was fortunate in the choice of such a confidante, who was equally removed from the harshness of arbitrary control, and the weak complaisance of indiscriminate concurrence.

Mrs. Aubrey and Emily now continued their walk, and, after examining the flower-beds, returned to the sitting-room, where they found Arthurina advancing in her work, Sensitive looking over her,

and Aubrey reading at the same table. Arthurina had early discovered a turn for drawing; her eye was just, and the lessons she had taken from a master had drawn forth her taste. Sensitive was delighted at the improvement he observed in her talent, and undertook to teach her to paint in oil. He also gave Arthur-William some lessons in drawing, on finding he had a taste for it. Time never hung less heavy upon their hands. Emily, having relieved her mind by her confidence in her mother, recovered her natural cheerfulness: the family visited, and rambled as usual. In their walks Sensitive supplied the place of Arthur, and, with the eye of an artist, caught and pointed out new beauties of picturesque scenery. The sublimity of the castle was a favourite study with him, and he sketched the various striking views it presented. The day after Arthur and Edmund left Mariton, Aubrey's celebrated Raphael arrived; and, by an unanimous vote, Jacob's wife was decreed to be hung over the chimney, in the sitting-room. Sensitive, on finding that Aubrey was uneasy under the circumstance of the purchase, had given up the point: he had received and appropriated the money for Elton's check; and, having seen the Madona packed up before he left London, ordered it to be sent after him to Mariton by the waggon. It was placed where it would be most seen, as a token of liberality and friendship. The painting itself was good, and Aubrey declared and felt that he now valued it a thousand times more than if it were a real Raphael.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The pain of concealment—Arthur and Edmund's singular adventure at a retired cottage—The pleasure of freedom from disguise—The friends in chace of a beauty—Sequel of their adventure.

The distance to Warwick through Loughborough and Leicester was much the same as that by Ashby de la Zouch and Atherston; and Arthur, on leaving Mariton, took the latter road. For some time Edmund was absorbed in thought; the happiness he had enjoyed among the Aubreys, the new emotions excited by Emily, the necessity of subduing them, the pain of parting, and the long farewell he had taken, oppressed his heart. To his friend's recurring question of "How are you, Edmund?" he answered no more than, "Oh! very well, thank you:" and relapsed into silence, which was not noticed by Arthur, whose mind was equally occupied by his own secret, till Edmund, after repeated efforts to smother his feelings, put his handkerchief to his eyes, and gave way to a shower of tears. When the violence of this emotion subsided, Arthur asked him what was the matter; to which he replied, with more truth than candour, that he was overcome by reflecting on the happy time he had spent at Mariton, on its being passed, and on the little prospect he had of repeating his visits. Arthur joined in regretting the distance at which they lived, and saying he hoped notwithstanding that they should be frequently together, again became thoughtful.

At a little village, called Snarston, about half way between Ashby de la Zouch and Atherston, and near twelve miles from Mariton, Arthur told his friend that he had some business to transact, which it was necessary for him to dispatch before they

proceeded on their journey; and, stopping at a pretty lane, asked him to alight from the gig and walk with him. They both got out, and Arthur desired their attendant to go and refresh the horses at the village inn. Walking down the lane, Arthur said: "My dear Edmund, I am very unhappy; "and doubly so, as I dare not tell, even to you, "the cause of my unhappiness. I know I should "be easier if I unburdened my heart to you, and I "wish to do it more than I can express, but the "secret belongs to another person. Never, never, "will I have another secret which I may not com- "municate to you and to my father: but this, Ed- "mund, is of such a nature that you would despise "me if I were capable of divulging it." Edmund had been so absorbed in other meditations, that he did not once think of the commission he had received from Aubrey relative to his friend, and, even if he had thought of it, it was not his intention to execute it before their arrival at Melford: this speech of Arthur's however, not only recalled it to his mind, but gave such an opening for it, that he was about to convince him that he had no secret, when he was prevented by the appearance of a man getting over a stile close by them. "Ha! Grant!" cried Arthur, "I was coming to you. I suppose "you thought me dead at least."—"Well, fegs! I "didn't know what to make on't, not I, Master "Rivers:" replied Grant, a decent looking countryman, who was now standing in the lane with the two friends: "I thought, for my part, as how you "had given up all thoughts of the place—it's a "sweet pretty place, and I mought have let it again "and again sin I seed you, for all it be so retired; "and it wan't but last Saturday a gentleman comed "ater it, who said he would come again sometime "this week to see nar if it were disposed of."—"I

" am glad of it, Grant," said Arthur, " for I am " come to tell you that I can't take it, and to pay " you for the time you have kept it unlet: come, " let's go back."

They got over the stile, into a footpath which was a short cut to the farmer's, and, climbing up the steep sides of two fields, came to an eminence that overlooked a beautiful country: a little way down a gradual slope stood a pretty cottage almost concealed by trees and shrubs, and, at a considerable distance to the right, an indifferent farm house, which belonged to Grant. They went into the cottage, which was handsomely furnished, and which Edmund said was one of the neatest and prettiest things he had ever seen. " Well, Grant!" said Arthur, " what do I owe you?"—" Oh!" replied Grant, " but a trifle, Master Rivers." This was the second time he had called Arthur *Rivers*, and Edmund was not a little surprised at it. " Not " such a trifle either, my good fellow," cried Arthur: " some nine or ten guineas, I suppose."—" Oh! bless you! no master," answered Grant, " not aboon a guinea and a half. The young lady " was here about a week agone, and paid me up, " and bid me not let it to any body else yet till I " heard more." At mention of the young lady, Arthur looked at Edmund, and their eyes met. " She said she would come again in a few days; " and I ha looked for her all yesterday, and to-day, " and the day before." On this Arthur paid him the guinea and a half; and then stood some time at a window with Edmund, admiring the situation of the cottage, and the surrounding country.

The lane formed an elbow round the height on which the cottage stood; and the carriage road from the cottage fell into it about a hundred yards from the farm-house. Looking towards it, Arthur saw

company on horseback, and pointed them out to the farmer. "Fegs!" said Grant, "this maun be the "lady herself."—"Is it possible!" exclaimed Arthur: "she must not see me. Grant! What is to "be done? I have very particular reasons for not "wishing to be seen by her at present."—"Why! "master Rivers!" replied he, "you and your "friend may go into that closet; it is not likely "she'll open it; and, to make sure, you may bolt "yourselves in."—"And pray, my friend," said Edmund, "who is the lady?"—"I beseech you," cried Arthur, "not to ask." Then withdrawing from the window, that they might not be observed, Arthur looked from a corner till he was fully satisfied that it was Lady Sudley herself. A gentleman rode by her side, and they were attended by a single footman. Arthur made the farmer promise not to say a word about him; and, if she offered to pay for the last week, to take the money without scruple. He then hurried with Edmund into the closet, sending Grant out to receive the lady.

For some time she stood talking with the farmer at the gate; at length she entered the room, saying to her companion; "is not it a pretty little place?" —"A very sweet place;" replied the gentleman, in a voice familiar to Arthur's ear; "I was all over it "the day before yesterday, and a delightful retreat "it is at this time."—"Well, Mr. Grant," said he to the farmer, "as you and the lady have settled "that you are at liberty to let it, I agree to take it "for six weeks certain, and I will send a servant "here to-morrow with my baggage."—"Very well, "Sir," said the farmer, "it's all ready for you." The lady then saying that she should like some fruit, Grant left the room to go and bring her a plate of cherries out of the garden. As soon as he was gone, she put her friend in mind that he had very nearly

called her Lady Sudley, at the gate, before Grant; and entreated him, as he regarded her reputation, to be careful. "I will indeed," replied he, "and I "will always call you by my own name." Arthur was confident that he knew the man who spoke; but, what with the confusion he was in, and his surprise at what he heard, he could not recollect his person; his suspense, however, was soon removed by Lady Sudley's calling him by his name: it was no other than his friend; his gay, lively, agreeable friend Elton, whom he had often seen in her company at Warwick and at Allesley; and who had so charmed him that he was very anxious he should recover the good opinion of Aubrey. "My dear "Elton," said her Ladyship, "though I despise the "world, I do not want to be driven from it; and, as "the good people, who are so called, require only "appearances, they ought to be indulged."—"Your "Ladyship," said Elton, "was not always so pru-"dent."—"No more of that, if you love me Hal," cried she, affectedly; "I was so provoked with the "qualms and absurdities of the foolish lad you al-"lude to, that I very nearly exposed myself to make "something of him; but he was so sentimental, and "so godly, and so unhappy about my soul, that he "tired me to death. I suspected the last huff he "took would complete him: it is almost two months "since I saw him, and I hope I shall never see him "any more."—"He has been dangerously ill," said Elton. "Yes," replied she, "I heard of his "illness, but it was only a short one; I know he has "been riding about the country for a fortnight or "three weeks past. Indeed I did not want him "near me again; so he is a fool if he thinks he mor-"tifies me: believe me, Elton, I never had a grain "of affection for him."—"Your Ladyship need not "be afraid," said Elton, "I have no jealousy in

" my composition. I confess I think him a fine
" youth, and the family altogether are a fine family;
" though, as you observe of young Aubrey, a little
" too sentimental and eccentric. I pity them for
" their misfortunes."—" They are very poor, are
" not they?" said Lady Sudley. " Oh! terribly
" reduced, poor things!" replied he: " how they
" manage to keep their heads above water, I can't
" tell. I do every thing I can for them. It was
" but the other day, if you will believe me, my dear
" Lady Sudley, that I gave the father a check on
" my banker for three hundred pounds."—" How
" good of you! Elton."—" Not at all; I have a
" very great regard for the family, and I mean to
" do something more for them, when I get in all
" my uncle Trevor's outlying money."—" What
" kind of girls are the daughters?" said Lady Sud-
ley. " Why really," replied Elton, " charming
" young women; elegant and accomplished. Emily,
" the elder, is very sensible; and Arthurina is a
" merry little grig."—" Arthurina!" cried Lady
Sudley: " what a fantastical name! Was not there
" something of an attachment between Mrs. Au-
" brey and my brute of a Lord?"—" Yes," said
Elton, " but I don't remember the circumstances;
" I was but a boy at the time she married."—" How
" old do you take my squeamish spark to be?"—
" Not more than twenty, if so much."—" I hope
" his father means to make a parson of him, he is fit
" for nothing else in this world; and something he
" must do or starve. I am sorry I let him dangle
" after me so long. Had you been more explicit,
" my dear Elton, I should have discharged him long
" ago."—" I really thought your Ladyship's heart
" seriously engaged."—" My heart!" exclaimed
Lady Sudley, laughing, " engaged seriously? with
" such a flint as Arthur Aubrey! He has no more

" notion of the passion of love than a broomstick: " he is incapable of it."—" If *you* failed to inspire " it, my lovely Emma," said Elton, " he must in- " deed be incapable of it. Such a face and form as " yours——" Here Grant returned with the fruit, and remained in the room till it was eat, talking of the cottage, its beauties, its conveniences, and the persons who had occupied it: from which it appeared that the farmer had never been over scrupulous as to the purity of his tenants. Elton again told him to expect his servant with his things the next day; and, the agreement being perfectly understood, went out with Lady Sudley, leaving the coast clear to the two astonished friends, who, hearing the feet of the horses as they went from the cottage, came from their place of retreat.

During the conversation that had passed in their hearing, they at first looked with astonishment at each other, smiled as it proceeded, and at last with difficulty restrained themselves from bursting into loud laughter. In this particular they made themselves amends when honest Jack Elton and the lovely Lady Sudley were out of hearing. They stood gazing at each other, and laughing for some minutes without being able to speak; and in this mood, the farmer found them, on his return from the gate. " Fegs!" cried he, " I be glad to see you so merry, " for I was affrighted out on my senses for fear you " should ha' burst out, and quarrelled for the lady: " she's a spunky lass, Master Rivers."—" Very " much so, Master Grant," said Arthur, " and I " am vastly obliged to her. Was she ever here be- " fore with that gentleman?"—" No, never. I " never seed her but the time she come with you, " and once more about eight days sin that she come, " as I told you, and paid me."—" Well, farmer," said Arthur, " next time you see her, inform her

" where I was while you were gathering her cher-
" ries ; and, if you tell her that I paid the last week's
" rent, it will be a strong proof, you know." He then turned to Smyth, and cried: " Come, Ed-
" mund ! we'll talk the matter over as we go along." Bidding the farmer good-day, they left the cottage laughing.

" A pretty kind of secret this of yours, Arthur !" said Edmund, as they proceeded up the slope which they had walked down : " you see Mr. Elton
" knows it, though I don't."—" My dear Edmund," cried Arthur, " I never felt my heart so light and
" so happy as at this moment."—" What ! my
" friend, at the moment your secret is betrayed and
" your mistress forsakes you ?"—" Yes ; at the mo-
" ment that my heart is all your own, and that I have
" got fairly out of the clutches of an abandoned
" woman."—" Of a very handsome one, they say."
—" Handsome enough ; but, thank Heaven ! she
" has nothing but personal beauty : had she en-
" snared my heart as she seduced my fancy, I should
" have remained a wretch, a miserable wretch, all
" my life: but she says very true, she found my
" heart flint, untouched by the passion of love. She
" had neither sense nor sentiment to gild vice with ;
" and, instead of finding intense happiness to be the
" consequence, as I conceived, of an intercourse
" with a woman, I found short fits of pleasure
" punished with long intervals of distaste and the
" remorse of secrecy. I first met this woman at
" Warwick, where I danced with her. I was off
" my guard, and she succeeded in her attempt to
" inflame my fancy and my senses. She first con-
" trived to see me privately at Warwick, and I af-
" terwards visited her at her house at Allesley,
" while, for the sake of appearances, I lodged at
" Coventry. I was very anxious for her reputation ;

" for, though she inspired me with no esteem, I had
" the vanity to believe that I had inspired her with
" the passion of love. I thought myself the cause
" of her lapse from innocence, and I would not have
" betrayed her for my life; on the contrary, I felt
" myself bound to console, and, if possible, to rein-
" state her in her own opinion, and the love of vir-
" tue, before there was any danger of her losing her
" fame; but, instead of my gaining ground in this
" design, my resolutions always gave way to her
" trifling, and I discovered that I stood no chance
" in a tête-à-tête. I wrote her a letter, disguising
" my hand, and signing the fictitious name of Rivers,
" which I had taken in different excursions; to be
" sure, it might have served my father for part of a
" sermon, but it was sincere, Edmund; more sincere
" than effectual, either as to her or myself. I thought
" more about her after I sent my letter than I had ever
" done before: I became more and more anxious to
" see her again; I went, was laughed at, and sub-
" dued. It was during a visit my family were mak-
" ing at Leicester, that I took the opportunity of
" seeing her; it was in that week that I had such a
" struggle between my senses and my understanding,
" that I at first completely yielded myself to the former,
" and had afterwards nearly become a victim to the
" emotions produced by the latter. In that week,
" I rode with her to this place, which was recom-
" mended to her by her confidential maid, a French-
" woman, who had lived there with her former mis-
" tress; and I almost consented to its being taken
" by me, under the name of Rivers, in order to fa-
" cilitate our meeting, as it is at no very great dis-
" tance from Allesley, and little more than an hour's
" gallop from Mariton. All I did, however, was to
" tell the man not to let it till he heard again from
" me. My not immediately closing with the farmer

" offended her. She hardly spoke to me all the way " back, but to say some sarcastic and ill-natured " thing; and, at her own house, she opened upon " me with all the fury of a tygress. I spent the " whole night in striving to pacify her, and it was " broad day before I had any success: at length she " moderated, and a reconciliation took place, on my " assuring her that I would take the cottage. I " was too much agitated to think of consequences; " I spoke unmeaningly; I mounted my horse with- " out taking either rest or refreshment, and I rode " all the way from Allesley to Mariton without stop- " ping. At home, alone, I formed new resolutions; " I detested myself for my insincerity to my father; " I recollected your uncle's Seraphina to my own " disadvantage, and with horror; for his father had " not been such a father to him as mine to me; his " Seraphina had understanding and talents combin- " ed with beauty; mine was silly and passionate. I " determined to break with her. I wrote, tore my " letter, wrote again, and again destroyed what I " had written; and, before I finally determined, a " fever, the consequence of my agitation and im- " prudent haste in the ride home, seized me: a state " of delirium ensued, and my disorder, as you know, " had nearly carried me off. In the course of my " recovery, my mind has dwelt with the greatest " anxiety on the shocking state of dissimulation in " which I have been living for some time past with " my family; with a father, whose pride it is to have " substituted in his plan of education, love and can- " dour for authority and rigour; whose chief object " is the welfare and happiness of his children, and " who, by blending the tenderness of a parent with " the confidence and amiable qualities of a compa- " nion, has produced a friendship of a nature un- " usually delightful. Oh! Edmund, I am unworthy

" of him!"—" My dear friend," cried Edmund, " that sentiment more than restores the lost portion " of worthiness: you are worthier of him than ever; " worthier than if you had never had occasion to " express this feeling. You must lose no time in " opening your heart to him: you can have no com- " punction, now that we have witnessed a scene " which discharges you from all reserve, and ren- " ders silence no longer a point of delicacy."— " But how," cried Arthur, " how shall I be able " to mention it to him?"—" Write to him," replied Edmund, " from Melford; a letter will be a less " painful mode of communication to both than a " personal confession. Be assured, Arthur, it will " not only remove your wretchedness on the sub- " ject, but will exalt you in your father's opinion, " and, if possible, increase his love."—" How sweet " it is," cried Arthur, "to have a friend! What a load " is already cast off my mind by your participation " of this secret! Yes, I will take your advice, I will " write to my father fully from Melford: his pity " and encouragement are the only things now want- " ing to complete my happiness; for, as to forgive- " ness, oh! my dear Edmund, he is incapable " of a sentiment towards his children on which the " idea of forgiveness could be founded."

Edmund was more and more charmed with his friend, whose description of his father in the course of this conversation, joined with the recollection of what had passed between Aubrey and himself, had more than once awakened a wish that nature had been equally propitious to him: not but that he possessed in his uncle all he could desire in a parent; but the striking contrast between his lot and Arthur's, in this respect, was a painful reflection. To be the son of a man capable of deserting him, of ill-treating his mother, of deceiving such a spirit as

his uncle's, weighed upon his heart. A tear started to his eye at Arthur's remark; he wiped it away, saying, "How sweet must it be to have a father! "Oh, God! how can a man forsake his child!"

The keenness of Edmund's feelings were equalled by the refinement of his sentiments. Far from using the opportunity to inform his friend of the confidence Aubrey had placed in him, he felt how much more grateful it would be both to him and to Arthur that the communication should be made by the latter, before he was apprized of his secret being known to the former; and, accordingly, not a word or look escaped him, by which his friend might be induced to suspect his father privy to his intercourse with Lady Sudley, to whose conduct and sentiments he again adverted, and congratulated him on the fortunate recovery of his liberty. The conversation between her Ladyship and Elton returning to their recollection, Arthur gave the latter credit for some of his sentiments, and reprobated him for others; and, having explained the late transaction respecting the check, they arrived at Snareston, laughing.

The horses being refreshed, they got into their gig, and proceeded at a round trot towards Atherston. "At this rate," said Edmund, "it is not unlikely "that I may be blessed with a sight of our beauty." —"That would be awkward too," cried Arthur, pulling up; "we'll go a little slower."—"I should "enjoy your passing the gentleman and lady," replied Edmund, "with a recognizing bow."—"Shall "we give chace then?"—"Do." Arthur on this gave the horse his head, and they went forward with great speed; but without the effect proposed. They passed through Atherston, and arrived at Nuneaton, without seeing the object of their pursuit. While they halted here, they saw an Atherston post-chaise, the blinds up and the post-boy mounted, drive ra-

pidly through the town; and, about half an hour after, a servant on horseback, leading two horses, one of which had a side-saddle on. Arthur immediately recognized Lady Sudley's bay gelding and Elton's footman, whose appearance with the horses made it very clear who were in the post-chaise. The pursuit was now given up as a hopeless one, and the friends proceeded more gently to Coventry, where they intended to dine. From the time they left Grant's cottage, Arthur's spirits seemed to rise; while Edmund's, except at the outset of the chace after Lady Sudley, gradually sunk, till he became so absent at times, that Arthur could not help taking notice of it.

On the road, though they travelled at an easy pace, they overtook Elton's man, to whom Arthur spoke. After asking how his master did;—"Is he "married, Frank, since I saw him?" said Arthur with a smile, looking at Lady Sudley's horse.—"Oh! dear! no, sir," answered Frank, pressing his lips together.—"That side-saddle is a capital nag; "is it your master's?"—"No, sir; it is the lady's."—"Oh! it's the lady's! What's her name?"—"'Pon my word, sir, I never asked."—"And I "shall take it for granted you don't know: but "where is your master at present?"—"Why, sir, "I can't exactly say, my master has been so unsettled "lately: he is sometimes at Warwick, sometimes at "Birmingham; last night he was at Coventry; and "I don't know where he'll be to-night."—"Well! "Frank," said Arthur, "give my compliments to "him and to the lady that belongs to the horse, and "tell them I wish them their health at Snareston." Having driven on a little way, he turned to look back, and, seeing Frank and his own attendant talking, did not doubt that he should get more information at second-hand than Frank thought it prudent

to give in a direct manner. He was not wrong in his conjecture; and he learned at Coventry, from his man, that Lady Sudley, on her return from Grant's, had met him coming from watering the horses, had looked hard at one of them, and asked if it were not Mr. Aubrey's? had inquired where he had been, where he was going, and if any one was with him. From Frank he had heard, that the lady and gentleman, as soon as they parted with him, set off a gallop to Atherston, where, leaving their horses to bait, they took a post-chaise, and proceeded without delay. The reason of the gig's not overtaking them was now very clear to Arthur and Edmund, who sat down to dinner extremely diverted and delighted with the adventures of the morning. Towards the end of their repast, the waiter of the inn, to whom Arthur was well known, gave him a letter, and said, that the person who brought it waited for an answer. Acquainted with the writing of the superscription, he laid it on the table and finished his meal, which he made with more appetite and relish than he had done for a long time before. The cloth removed, and the waiter withdrawn, he opened the letter, smiled, and read aloud what follows:

"I heard by the merest chance of your being in "this part of the country. What can have kept "you so long from me? I heard of your being well "weeks ago. You know my love for you—do not "give me cause to repent it. I shall expect you at "Allesley to-night. If you should have been informed of my being at Grant's cottage, in company, suspend your opinion—I will explain every "thing to your satisfaction. I was told that you "intend going on towards Gloucestershire without "stopping: I cannot, I will not believe it. In spite "of the quarrel we had the day before we parted, I

" will not believe you so cruel, so devoid of feeling,
" and of honour. The quarrels of lovers, you know,
" serve but to increase the pleasures of love. Come
" as soon as it is dark: Justine shall see all clear,
" and be ready to receive you as usual. It will be
" an age to me till we meet. Write to me by the
" bearer, and do not fail to tell me that you will
" come. My Aubrey, I am sure, will not disap-
" point his adoring

" EMMA."

" Monday, 4 o'clock."

Arthur and Edmund looked with astonishment at each other: they were little acquainted with the dissimulation and stratagems of artful women; and at first, instead of laughing at this new proof of Lady Sudley's hypocrisy and depravity, they exclaimed against it with horror. " What a shocking woman!" cried Edmund; " adding falsehood to falsehood! " heaping crime upon crime!"—" I could not have " conceived this possible," exclaimed Arthur, " without such conviction."—" What will you do?" said Edmund.—" Why," replied he, " the sooner " we order our horses and leave Coventry the bet- " ter."—" Write her word," said Edmund, " that " you should only *tire her to death by your sentiments,* " *godliness, and anxiety for her soul;* that *you are* " *only fit to be a parson;* that *she cannot possibly* " *think of letting you dangle any longer after her,* " *since the immaculate Mr. Elton has been so explicit;* " that *you are a flint, and know no more of the pas-* " *sion of love than a broomstick.*" This sarcastic repetition of Lady Sudley's words made Arthur laugh, and merriment took place of horror. The gig was ordered to the door; and the friends, forgetting her Ladyship's messenger, who was waiting for an answer, set off for Warwick.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

True love not easily subdued—The nature of it—Difficult to be kept a secret—A scheme of pleasure.

All reserve, all disguise, being banished from Arthur's heart, he proceeded on his journey full of life and spirits; while a concealed struggle agitating Edmund's, depressed him in proportion. The former talked away, the latter was silent and absent. At Warwick they put up for the night, intending to spare their horses as much as possible; and here Arthur was again so struck with the alteration of Edmund's countenance, and manner altogether, that he began to suspect that something was preying upon his mind; and he resolved to make him disclose it.

The conquest of the passions and desires with which men are assailed is rendered less difficult by early habits; and Edmund, from his infancy, had been taught to oppose and to conquer: his uncle, both by precept and example, had assisted him in the regulation of his mind, and no youth ever possessed a greater degree of self-command. At Melford, engaged in study, fond of his mother and sister, no object of a different love to that he felt for them had presented itself to his heart, nor had he conceived that he should ever feel a passion which it would not be easy for him to subdue. The sight of beauty had been no rarity to him; he had been pleased with it, he had admired it, but the emotion it raised was slight; he dreaded not its impression, and he flattered himself that he was master over the passion it usually inspired, and which he understood to be love. Confident in his strength, he did not discover his danger, till he learned from experience

that it did not arise from beauty. He had formed a friendship with Arthur, and he wished to form one with his sister. His attempt to do this unfolded that congeniality which gives to beauty its unconquerable charm, and lights a flame that cannot be extinguished. Edmund, as has been seen, soon found that he had a much severer struggle to make than he had imagined; his heart had not been captivated through his senses, but his senses charmed through his heart: it was not till he was in love with Emily that he became sensible of the magic of her person, and felt that the friendship he sought had led to love. As it was a genuine passion, rising from its pure and noble source, the necessity of smothering it was hard, doubly hard on Edmund: conformity of mind, virtue, intellect, and beauty combined; nothing was wanting to warrant hope, and stamp duration, but that affluence which had been unaccountably removed from their view, on the one side by the negligence of an uncle, and on the other by the cruelty of a father. Though the lowest of the necessary combinations either in exciting or justifying the passion, yet, to a mind well formed, it was too important to be unheeded. Edmund could not reconcile to his feelings the thought of involving the object of his love in the difficulties and distresses of poverty; and, accordingly, when he detected, he resolved to subdue his passion. Flight and absence, he had read, were the best auxiliaries in such a contest, and he lost no time in enlisting them in his service; but now he found, the farther he went the more powerful the passion with which Emily had inspired him: even the occurrences of the day, so important to the repose of his beloved friend, could not banish her from his thoughts for half an hour; and he was inclined to doubt the truth of his reading. But whether true or not, whether

his passion should defy himself and his auxiliaries, or outlive his youth, he thought his mind equal to supporting it without molesting her. His spirits might sink, his health be injured, his life be undermined, but Emily should never know that she was the cause of the melancholy fate that awaited him. Such were the thoughts on which he dwelled when they arrived at Warwick.

As they alighted Arthur proposed to him a walk before dark on one of the banks of the Avon, in order to take a view of the castle and town. Edmund consented; and they strolled for some time, observing the situation of Warwick and the surrounding country, and talking on the adventures of the day. At length Arthur, anxious to relieve the mind of his friend by drawing it forth, said to him: "What a difference, my dear Edmund, is there be-"tween the state of my feelings to-day and yester-"day. While my secret was pent up in my own "bosom, I was the most miserable of beings; I "lamented that the strength of my constitution and "the skill of my physician had snatched me from "the grave: now that you share it with me, and "that I am able again to treat my father with un-"bounded confidence, I am happy beyond expres-"sion. There cannot be a greater punishment than "having a secret; than being obliged to lock up "one's heart from those we love."—Edmund fetched a deep sigh. "Nay, give it vent in words, my "friend," said Arthur; "why conceal *your* secret "from me?"—"*My* secret!" exclaimed Edmund, turning pale as he spoke.—"You may conceal *the* "*secret* from me, Edmund, but you cannot conceal "from me that there is one lying heavy at your "heart, and want of curiosity in me would be want "of friendship. If any Lady Sudley, if any Sera-"phina"—"Oh, no!" cried Edmund, with another

sigh.—"Then what is it, my friend," said Arthur, "that oppresses your heart? Nothing but a criminal conduct like mine should have power to do it. I know you will be easier, Smyth, when you have opened yourself to me: I have a right to your confidence, and I should not deserve if I did not claim it."—"I will not deny," replied Edmund, "that there is a weight upon my heart; and I am sure, my dear Arthur, that I should be easier in some degree were I to tell you the cause of it: but —, what shall I say —? I cannot tell you what is passing in my mind, without injuring you, by binding you again to a secrecy from which your whole family must be excluded."—"Stay," cried Arthur, "let me set you to rights there. I should not hold myself bound to disclose to my father any secret of yours, in which he can have no concern. Such disclosure makes no part of our notions of candour and confidence: all that relates to myself, to him, to the whole family; my sentiments, my conduct; in short, all that it imports him to know, are essential to that open character, that singleness of heart, on which he justly lays so great a stress, and which he has taught all his children to consider as the first step in the ladder to Heaven: but do not imagine that he would require, or even be pleased that I should divulge a secret of yours, which no way relates to him. You may, therefore, safely unbosom yourself, and confide the cause of your uneasiness to your friend, who will at least assist you in bearing, if he cannot relieve it."—"You are worthy of your father, you are all worthy of one another," cried Edmund; "and I would rather die than interrupt the heavenly confidence that reigns among you. You shall excuse this reserve, Arthur, this single reserve; I will have no other thought to which my

" heart will not freely admit you."—" Answer me " but these questions," said Arthur: " Does it im- " plicate the virtue of another? Have you promised " secrecy?"—" Neither; yet you have yourself " confirmed the necessity of keeping this secret " from you."

Edmund was not aware of the extent of this reply. " How can that be?" said Arthur, " unless the as- " surance that I did not consider my family as in- " cluded in a confidence that related to yourself; " unless —" The truth flashed upon his mind; a complacent smile settled on his face; he looked at Edmund with the affection of a brother: " 'Tis as " I guess," said he. Smyth turned pale. " Ed- " mund, my dear Edmund!" continued Arthur, " there are now no secrets on either side. My sis- " ter —" A sudden revulsion took place in Smyth's frame; the blood, which had forsaken his face, now rushed back to it, doubled in quantity; and Arthur regarded the blush as a full confirmation. " Yes, " Edmund," continued he, " you are in love with " Emily! Confide in me, my friend; you never " shall have cause to repent your confidence; nor " need you blush for having lost your heart to such " a girl; one more lovely, or more deserving of my " friend, does not exist."—" I know not, Arthur," said Edmund, " whether this be exactly fair, or " whether I ought to permit you to wrest my emo- " tions to the confirmation of your opinion: but I " feel too much pleasure in this effusion of your " friendship to resist the opportunity of saying, that " I am resolved not to encourage a passion so void " of all hope. Yes, Arthur, it is the consciousness " of this hopeless passion, for I will not deny what " you have discovered, that preys upon my mind; " a passion which, however I may stifle it, I feel I " shall never conquer. But, as you have extracted

" this confession from me, I call upon you, in the " name of friendship, to keep it from the knowledge " of your sister; it can be of no moment to her, " and I promise you that she shall never know it " from me."—" You are in haste," cried Arthur, " to promise what I do not require, and what I shall " be unhappy to find necessary. Let me speak of " it to my father, Edmund."—" If you think it im- " proper," replied Smyth, " to know that I love " your sister without communicating my unhappy " secret to him, I will not require your silence; " but, when you recollect that I shall never after- " wards be able to feel myself at ease in his pre- " sence, if you can bring yourself, on my assurance " of never opening my lips to any other but you on " the subject, and on my promise of struggling " against this passion, to consider it unimportant to " your father, I could wish the knowledge of it con- " fined to ourselves."—" You mistake me," said Arthur; " my desire to mention it to him arises " from a hope that the communication might lead " to a result propitious to your passion, which I do " not see in so unhappy a light as you do. Why " should not you love Emily? Why should not you " have her?"—"What!" cried Smyth, "a poor, de- " serted wretch, ignorant of his father, who may be " yet living for aught he knows! an intruder, with " his mother and sister, on the pittance of a bene- " volent uncle! a peasant, doomed to till the ground " for subsistence?"—" Poh! poh! nonsense, my " dear Edmund," said Arthur: " as to worldly dis- " tinctions, you are a gentleman; and, as to mental " ones, my sister could never have a husband who " ranks higher: the only thing to be considered is, " how you are to live; and, if my father and your " uncle put their heads together, who knows what " they may strike out?"—" They would think me

" mad, Arthur; it would make them both unhappy. " Indeed, it must not be! and then what would Miss " Aubrey say?"—" Say! why that she was the hap- " piest and most fortunate of her sex."—" For " God's sake! my friend," cried Edmund, " do not " put me out of my senses. To raise hope without " probability is to lay a foundation for madness."— " Emily," said Arthur, " will never act imprudent- " ly, I am certain; she will not, like you, set about " falling in love, but I am sure she has a very great " regard for you; and, if my father were to tell her " that you could support a family happily, my life " for it she would be yours in preference to the " richest man in England."—" Spare me! spare " me! my dear friend: if you give me such an idea, " you will render it impossible for me to suppress " hope; and what will become of me then?"— " Let me have the management of this," said Ar- thur; " I'll not mention it to my father without " sounding him; and, if prudence press you to give " up Emily as a mistress, I know you will act like " yourself, and look upon her as a sister: but, as " for my part, I declare I do not despair of calling " you my brother; if, on conversing with my fa- " ther, I do not alter my opinion, I will not hesi- " tate to discover your affection for Emily, and I " am confident it will require no great use of elo- " quence to make her espouse your cause." Ed- mund, delighted and relieved by this conversation, told Arthur that he left him to do as he thought best; and that, be his fate what it would, he should ever esteem himself most fortunate in having such a friend. He resumed a great degree of cheerful- ness, and conversed in the most unreserved and easy manner with Arthur, who seemed to be doubly dear to him, on becoming the confident of his passion for Miss Aubrey.

As they returned towards the town, the fine tints of an autumn evening, which were spread through the sky and over the landscape before them, excited their admiration, and brought to Arthur's mind the beauties of Sudley-castle, which he described to Edmund in such terms of rapture as raised in him a great desire to see the place. Being in no haste to terminate their journey, they agreed to spend the whole of the next day in visiting it, and in lounging at Stratford, and on the banks of the Avon. As the execution of this agreement, so far as it related to Sudley-castle, depended upon the absence of its lord, it was necessary to inquire whether he were in the country or not; and at the inn they learned, to their great mortification, that he was at his seat.

The disappointment expressed by Edmund, determined Arthur to get a sight of the grounds at least, notwithstanding the presence of Lord Sudley; and though, in arriving at Warwick, he had resolved to pay no visit there, he called on a gentleman, to whom he had been introduced by Mr. Rowley, and through whom he thought it likely that he should obtain his object. He found that though, when his Lordship was at home, it was more difficult to get a sight of the house, a walk through the grounds was rarely refused, on a previous application of a few hours to the steward; to whom the gentleman accordingly wrote, and, as the mansion was well worth seeing, requested that the strangers might be permitted to go over it, if they could be indulged without any offence to Lord Sudley. This letter Arthur immediately dispatched to the steward; from whom he received an answer before he went to bed, by which he was informed that, by coming early in the morning, he might go over the house before his Lordship was out of bed, and that he never rose be-

fore nine or ten o'clock. Pleased with the prospect of gratifying their wish, and happy in the mutual and unbounded confidence which had been this day established between them, they retired to rest, determining to be very early next morning at Sudley-castle.

CHAPTER XL.

A visit to Sudley-castle—Edmund loses his way and achieves an heroic deed—Arthur's reception at Melford.

The morning was fine: the travellers left Warwick about seven o'clock; and, in less than half an hour, Arthur pointed out to Edmund the lofty turrets of Sudley-castle, peeping through the rich foliage of majestic woods. For several miles, between Warwick and Stratford, many beautiful glimpses are caught of this elegant seat; and Edmund had admired it as he passed before on his way to Mariton: but the beauty of the aspect it now presented was heightened by imagination, from the account he had received from Arthur, and he saw it with double pleasure. Turning to the left from the high road, they drove down a wide handsome lane, lined on each side with large elms: at the distance of a mile and a half they came to the little village of Burford, where they alighted at the house of Lord Sudley's steward, who sent a man with them up to the castle, and in the mean time ordered their horses to be taken care of. Arthur took pains to inform himself that there was no likelihood of his meeting Lord Sudley, for, though he had no respect for him, and even felt a kind of retrospective resentment against him for his infamous conduct towards his mother,

there was a certain consciousness about him, which assured him that he would have no satisfaction in a sight of his Lordship; and, as they walked from Burford, he hinted to Edmund that he should like to get through the apartments as fast as they could.

They entered the house by a flight of steps, under a great portico supported by four lofty Corinthian columns, and went into a well-proportioned hall, finished in plain stucco, and adorned with vases and lamps on handsome brackets: before them was the grand staircase; the walls and cieling of which were ornamented with pannels and festoons in stucco. They were first shown into the breakfast parlour, where they saw several fine landscapes, and some family portraits. Here Edmund, gazing a considerable time at the picture of a girl, desired Arthur to look at it, and then asked him how he liked it. "The countenance," said Arthur, "is most lovely; "I could look at it till I was captivated, were it not "for those frightful stiff stays that squeeze to death "the graces of nature."—"Say you so, my friend?" cried Edmund, "then I advise you not to go to "Melford, if you wish not to be captivated entirely; for you will find that face, look at it and remember it, glowing with life and health, and supported by a form in which none of the graces of "nature are squeezed to death. It is precisely feature for feature, line for line, character and all, "the countenance of my sister; and could not have "been more like her had it been done for her."—"She must be a charming girl indeed," said Arthur, "and faith the danger of living under the "same roof cannot but be great."—"Whose portrait is this?" said Edmund to the conductor. "That, Sir," replied the man, "is the portrait of "the old Lady Sudley, my Lord's mother, taken "when she was Lady Matilda Darley, at an early

"age." Edmund expressed his wonder at the likeness, and Arthur stood for some time contemplating it, saying, as he left it, that the painter had thrown a great deal of soul into his canvas.

From this they went into other rooms decorated with the works of the most celebrated painters; but, not having time to examine them, they contented themselves with glancing them over, and with admiring the elegance of the apartments. They were most delighted with the library and drawing-room, particularly the former, which was superb, eighty feet in length and twenty in height. On one side it had seven recesses; one of which was the entrance from the hall, the other six were filled with books, and in front of each was a bust of some ancient or modern genius placed on a pedestal. On the same side were two superb chimney-pieces, composed of rich antique marble. The entrances at each end were formed to correspond with the other recesses, and were highly ornamented. The other side of the room, which looked on the garden, had eight magnificent windows, and a pair of folding glass doors that opened upon the lawn, affording a delightful prospect. The drawing-room was large and magnificent, and the elegant decorations of it were adjusted with taste. "This is superb," said Arthur, admiring the chimney-piece, which was of rich Egyptian marble; "and yet I should "not be a bit more happy to sit before a fire here, "than I am at the parsonage. How should you "like to have Sudley-castle, Edmund, to live in for "the rest of your life?"—"How should I like it!" cried Edmund; "Oh! Arthur, to be able to offer "such a place as this to the object of one's love! "I never felt ambitious emotions before, but the "thought of that object expands my soul. No-"thing can be too grand or too noble for her, and

" while I look round me, I feel equal to the great-
" ness I would offer. In what are you or I inferior
" to this lord, who is soaking in his bed while we
" are really enjoying his property; a man unable to
" give or receive happiness! Yes, Arthur, were I
" master of this place I should enjoy it better than
" its present owner."—" Were I master of it," said Arthur, " I would immediately change it for Au-
" brey-hall; yet, hang it, I can be as happy at Ma-
" riton parsonage as in either of them."—" I also
" thought," said Edmund, " that I could be happy
" in a hut, but my mind is altered, Arthur; I feel
" as if I wanted a throne to bestow: but I will not
" wish; I will be superior to that madness at least."

They now quitted the house, and strolled through the grounds, where they continually met with the finest picturesque subjects, and where they wandered for hours enchanted with the scenery, which was in some places wild and sublime, and in others regular and beautiful. Edmund formed no wish to be master of these delightful scenes; but how worthy Miss Aubrey was to be mistress of them was a thought that attended all the pleasure he felt in viewing them. After sitting a considerable time in a rustic alcove, admiring the winding of the Avon along wooded banks and through distant pastures, Arthur rose and proposed to return to Burford and pursue their journey. As they approached the house, Edmund recollected that he had left his whip in the alcove, on which he begged Arthur to go on and order the chaise while he went back for it, saying that he would be with him before he was ready. " You must make haste then," said Arthur, " for I
" shall have all ready in less than five minutes."—
" I shall hardly be with you in twenty," said Edmund. Here they parted, and Edmund walking a quick pace soon found his whip.

Returning by a serpentine walk, which, about half way from the alcove, diverged into two paths, his thoughts all absorbed by Miss Aubrey, he took the wrong one, and proceeded a considerable way before he recollected himself. He turned to go back, when a sound of voices, evidently of two men in earnest talk, struck his ear. He looked about, and listened to ascertain whence it proceeded, when he saw, through a thick wood, the back of a bower, to which his eye was led by the sound. Presently two suspicious men crept out of the bower, and came round to the back of it, where they took pieces of black crape out of their pockets and disguised their faces. Edmund instantly unperceived skreened himself by the side of a large oak growing near the walk. "He is coming;" said one of them. "Cut his throat," replied the other. "I tell you, no;" cried the first, "we shall be found out by the blood or the knife: "if he is found hanging it will be supposed he did "it himself."—"Hush! get the gag ready." Edmund, from his station, saw a man cross a lawn in the middle of this retired shrubbery, whom he had no doubt was the intended victim of these murderers, and, though horror-struck, he could not help wondering at the daring attempt to commit such a crime in the face of day and so near the house. "Help!" cried a tremulous voice, which was immediately stopped.

Edmund had no weapon, and only his whip in his hand; but he was not of a nature to consider, on such an occasion, difficulties or personal danger, and hastily putting aside the intercepting branches of the underwood which had served to conceal him, he pushed round the bower. The assassins, too busy at their horrid work to attend to his approach, had already gagged their victim; and one was holding his arms while the other was struggling to put

a cord over his head. Edmund, darting forward, struck the latter with the butt end of his whip, on which the other man, releasing the arms of the devoted wretch, who trembled every limb, drew a short cutlass and aimed a stroke at Edmund, who, perceiving his intent, received it on his arm, and, closing with the fellow, wrenched the cutlass from his hand, on which he fled. Finding himself attacked behind, Edmund turned, and dextrously parrying a blow aimed at his throat, made a stroke at the second villain, which cut deep into his cheek. Deserted by his associate, he also fled; and their conqueror was about to pursue them, when he was seized by the person whose life he had saved, who shook his head, and by a sign requested assistance in removing the gag which one of the villains had placed upon his mouth. "I shall lose them:" cried Edmund, "have patience till I come back." The man clasped his hands in an imploring posture; on which his champion cut the knot of the gag, and then would have pursued the murderers, whom he saw brushing through the opposite woods, had he not been prevented by the stranger, who, holding him, said in a feeble voice, but with an authoritative tone: "Stay: you have done enough with them "—I am extremely agitated—I have hardly power "even to thank you, but assist me back to the house, "and you shall find me not ungrateful."

Edmund now scrutinized the figure before him. He was a tall emaciated man, broad over the shoulders, but with a chest which sunk inwards: his legs were hardly able to bear the weight of his body, and seemed to have been injured by the effects of the gout. His countenance had something penetrating in it, yet his eyes were hollow, his cheeks lank, and his features altogether bespoke more decay than age. He was genteelly dressed, and had

the air of a worn-out fashionable debauchee. Edmund had no doubt that it was Lord Sudley himself, and in spite of what he had heard of him, the evident punishment he suffered in the loss of health and in premature old age, combined with the delightful consciousness of having saved his life, excited in him, not only pity, but a degree of affection by no means unaccountable to those who have conferred important obligations on another: for there is a principle in nature which leads men to love those whom they serve, as well as to serve those whom they love; and the former impulse is sometimes the more powerful one. Edmund, with a look of united pity and affection, offered his arm, which was accepted by Lord Sudley, who, leaning on him, walked slowly across the green into an alley leading to a private subterranean passage, which conducted them to the lower part of the house. The nobleman having locked the gate of the passage, they ascended a stone stair-case, which brought them to a landing on the west side of the house, opening into a suite of apartments chiefly occupied by his Lordship. Lord Sudley was no longer the strong Herculean Lord Sudley who, some twenty years before, had projected the scheme of carrying off the injured Miss Melvil by force, but a poor nervous creature, reduced by a life of debauchery to the shadow of a man falling into the grave. He thanked his deliverer without animation, scarcely looking at him, while he attended to the restoration of his own spirits by applying the powerful stimulation of a certain tincture, of which he daily swallowed large potions.

When he had taken his dose, he asked Edmund if he knew whom he had delivered from the hands of the assassins. Edmund replied that he presumed it was Lord Sudley himself. "You are right, young "man," said his Lordship, "and though I know

" not how you came to be so near the scene of vil-
" lany, I hold myself bound to serve you; there-
" fore, before I assemble my people, let me under-
" stand who you are, and whether you are in want
" of assistance." Edmund, disgusted with the cold gratitude of the peer, said that he did indeed want assistance; but of a nature which he believed it was not in his Lordship's power to bestow. " I am sorry
" for that," said Lord Sudley, staring at the noble youth, who stood before him with the bloody cutlass under his arm, which he was binding round with his handkerchief to prevent the blood, with which he now found his coat sleeve drenched, from staining his Lordship's carpet. " I am sorry for that: what
" is it?"—" Nothing, my Lord," replied he, " but
" what I shall find at the next town, in the skill of
" a surgeon; I am bleeding: your Lordship will
" permit me to leave you."—" No, no; let me send
" for my surgeon from Warwick."—" By no means,
" my Lord, I have a friend waiting at Burford for
" me, and I shall sooner have the assistance I need
" by going."—" Well! do so; go, and when the
" wound is dressed come back, and think how I
" may make you a return." Edmund gently bowed, and was retiring. " Leave the cutlass," said Lord Sudley, " it may lead to a discovery of the villains." As he received the weapon with the trembling hand of an exhausted rake, he asked the name of the youth. Willing that Lord Sudley should suppose that he had been saved by the son of Miss Melvil's rescuer, Edmund evaded a direct reply; and, saying that he had left it with his Lordship's steward, requested to know the way to the hall. Lord Sudley then rang the bell violently, and, ordering the footman who appeared to send his butler and housekeeper to him, suffered Edmund to depart, repeat-

ing, "think of what I said, and let me see you "again."

Edmund found Arthur ready, and wondering at his stay: the steward was gone to Warwick. Having related his adventure, to the astonishment of his friend, they made the best of their way to Stratford, where Edmund had his wounds examined by a skilful surgeon. Besides the one upon the arm, he had received another across the shoulder: neither of them were dangerous; but from that on the arm he had lost a considerable quantity of blood, and was in consequence advised to stop a day or two before he proceeded. Nothing particular occurred during the rest of the journey of the two friends. Edmund's thoughts, in spite of all his endeavours to the contrary, fondly strayed to Leicestershire; and he was at Mariton when he arrived at Melford. Cowper and his sister received Arthur as if he had been their son, and Miss Smyth immediately recalled to his mind the lovely portrait he had so much admired at Sudley-castle.

CHAPTER XLI.

Mariton—Aubrey's first expences—The apparitions of the castle seen at the parsonage—Hue and cry after them—Emily receives proposals of marriage from two of her lovers—Her conversation with Aubrey.

At Mariton there happened no adventures, no uncommon occurrences; tranquillity and the accustomed cheerfulness of the Aubreys reigned at the parsonage. Reading, painting, music, and hospitality filled up the time. Emily studied, played, sung,

and thought of Arthur and Edmund as her elder brothers both. Arthurina and Arthur-William improved under the instructions of Sensitive, who was more delighted to instruct than he had ever been to learn; and Aubrey and the lovely partner of his bosom, while they enjoyed the scenes before them, endeavoured to console each other for Arthur's errors with the hope that he would see the folly of shutting up his heart from them, as well as view with horror the guilt of his intrigue.

Having resolved to pay their bills quarterly, that they might have a view of their expences continually under their eye, they had contemplated with some alarm the total of the midsummer quarter, which diminished the sum that had been lodged in the banker's hands considerably more than a half, so that there did not remain quite seven hundred pounds with him. But then in this total were included not only their expences at Mariton, but those of their journey down, and of their luggage by the waggon, the furniture bought of Mr. Dodson, the gig and the horse, and their stock of liquors, which was not half consumed. The remainder of his fund, and the stipend from the curacy were all they had to live upon during the life of their worthy friend the Doctor; but they relied on the approaching quarter being nothing like the foregoing one, and trusted that their economy would enable them to meet every exigency.

The talk and dread of the ghosts at the castle still prevailed, and neither ridicule nor serious admonition could cure the country people of their prejudice. It was said that they appeared more frequently than ever, and had been positively observed by several persons skipping in fire on the walls. One evening, at the end of the week in which Arthur and Edmund left Mariton, about midnight, just as the fa-

mily were going to retire, Cæsar came into the room in a great hurry, calling to Aubrey—"Massa, "Massa, come see ghost." This created a general laugh. "What!" cried Aubrey, "Cæsar see ghosts "too?"—"Massa!" said Cæsar, smiling, "come see "yourself."—"Let us all go," cried Mrs. Aubrey; and accordingly the whole family went with him into the garden. The night was serene, but dark; and nothing was plainly visible beyond the bounds of their own domains. In vain they looked towards the castle; it presented only a deeper black without peculiar form. For some time they watched the quarter where the appearances were expected, till at length they grew tired, and again laughing at the force of Cæsar's imagination, returned to the door, when a light was seen proceeding from the castle. Presently the light appeared at the windows, as if the interior were illuminated. Blue flames now ran along the parapet in various directions: at one of the windows a figure in white garments was seen forcing over another figure which was black, and, at the distance from the parsonage, not unlike what is usually painted for the devil. It sprang forward, and, precipitating to the ground, vanished in a flash of fire. All was immediately darkness, and, in the obscurity of the sky, not a trace remained of what had occurred. From the first appearance of the light to the vanishing of the black figure, not more time than ten minutes elapsed.

Aubrey, satisfied that this show was either the foolish amusement of some rash and inconsiderate people, or the device of roguery, proposed to Sensitive to go up to the castle without a moment's loss of time, and endeavour to make some discovery. To this Sensitive agreed; but Mrs. Aubrey and the girls entreated them earnestly not to go: for, however Aubrey might defy the devil and all his works,

he was not so well skilled in the defiance of the works of his imps in the human form. It was impossible to say for what purpose these tricks were played, or with what force they were protected. "But, my love," said Aubrey, "we will take Cæsar "and Charles's man, Joe, with us, and muster auxiliaries in the village: we will get Rowley, the "Spicers, and some of the villagers, I warrant you, "besides the constables."—"I think there can be "no danger," said Sensitive, "and it is really a "matter of great importance that these manœuvres "should be put an end to, whether they are merely "silly pranks or the cloak of villany." On their promising to go armed, and in a large body, Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina yielded to the persuasions of Aubrey, notwithstanding their fears; and the gentlemen sallied forth attended by their servants: the latter were sent to awake some of the stoutest of the villagers, while Aubrey and Sensitive recruited at the houses of their acquaintance. Col. Spicer had arrived that very evening from town, and, with his father and brother joined the party, which was strengthened with Mr. Rowley and several other gentlemen. Among the village hinds Cæsar and Joe had but little success: on two only could they prevail to leave their beds: they all declared that they were not afraid to turn out and fight like men with men, but begged to be excused attacking ghosts and devils. The party thought themselves sufficiently strong without them; and, armed with guns, pistols, and swords, made the utmost expedition to the castle. They met no one in their way; and when they arrived on the spot all was silence. They went through the deserted chambers of the castle; they stood listening in all directions: not a sound was heard but that of the wary buz of their own whispers, or of their cautious

treading as they moved from place to place. No vestige of the white ghost or of the black devil remained; not even the slightest smell of sulphur from the flame in which the latter vanished. The party walked every where over the scite on which the castle stood; several of them ascended the turrets in spite of the darkness that reigned on the stair-cases: they wandered from point to point, went through the lanes of the adjacent country, and called up the people at every house to inquire if they had seen or heard any thing stirring in the course of the night. In vain; nothing was learned that could lead to the detection of the persons concerned in the trick; and, after wandering about till day-light enabled them to examine the scene more minutely, they returned home disappointed, and wondering at the ease and dexterity with which their search had been eluded. The fact, however, being fully ascertained, the gentlemen of the country were determined if possible to discover the cause of it. The next day another visit was paid to the castle and its environs, with as little success as the former: the circumstance was made known at Loughborough, and all the neighbouring towns and villages; advertisements were stuck up threatening the actors in the affair with prosecution, and offering a reward for their apprehension; proper persons were hired to watch at night and give immediate notice of any fresh appearance: in short, such a train was laid for the discovery of the ghosts that their spiritships became indignant, and made themselves scarce.

Meanwhile the parsonage was haunted by a figure much more terrible to Emily than all the phantoms imagination could conjure up; Colonel Spicer became more and more assiduous in his attentions to her. Into whatever company she went she was sure to

find him one of the party; wherever she walked, he followed her; and his arch eye, fascinated by her beauty, was for ever fixed upon her. This attendance was extremely painful to the lovely girl; and she longed for a regular declaration of his passion, that she might have an opportunity of relieving herself from it. One day, after singing for him, while Arthurina was painting with Sensitive, she resolved to give him a fair opportunity; and, rising from the piano, said she wanted a little air, and walked into the garden. This encouragement was not wanting to embolden the gallant Colonel, who entertained no doubt of the success of his declaration when he chose to make it, for he conceived his person to be irresistible; but in spite of the flame kindled by the charms of Emily, he had been in the habit of ridiculing matrimony, had had reasons to consider the breach of its vows as a common consequence of making them, and had always thought the risk such as no man of sense would run. When first inspired with this passion, he did not scruple to hope the attainment of its object, without purchasing it so dearly as with the loss of liberty; but when he became more acquainted with the Aubreys, and observed the gaiety of the girls shielded by that virtuous reserve which impurity could never attack, he was convinced that there was no alternative but that of making Emily his wife. At times he thought it best to relinquish her altogether; but, in the study of commanding, he had never entered upon that of self-command. A regiment of warriors obeyed him at a word; but, whenever desire arose in his heart, instead of leading he was led; instead of commanding, he obeyed. Accordingly, giving reins to imagination, he had seized every opportunity of indulging himself in the company of its idol, and accumulated excitement bore away all scruples before it.

He attended her into the garden: she led to the very spot where she had freely conversed with her mother on Edmund, her brother Edmund, and where she intended to dismiss her Colonel. "This "is a pleasant arbour," said Col. Spicer, as they approached, "the prospect from it never fails to "present new attractions: will Miss Aubrey sit "here and enjoy the air?"—"With all my heart, "Colonel:" said Emily, entering and seating herself. He followed, and stood before her, fixing his arch eye on her with a double archness, which was designed to express what was passing in his mind.—After a short pause in this attitude, he attempted to take her hand, which she withdrew. "Nay," said he, "do not refuse me the happiness of pressing "your hand, while I lay my heart at your feet. I "adore you above all women."—"Colonel Spicer!" said Emily, "What do you mean?"—"To tell "you," replied he, "that I love you to distraction, "and that there is not any thing I will not do to "make you happy."—"Sir, this is language to "which I am not accustomed; and I assure you it "is by no means agreeable to me."—"Understand "me, my dear Miss Aubrey, before you say it is "not agreeable to you. Upon my soul I do not "mean to trifle with you. You are a most lovely "creature; and when I say that I love you, I mean "to offer you my hand." Emily, disgusted with this piece of vanity, assumed an air of dignified pride, and said: "Offer! Sir! If ever I conde-"scend to think of any man as a lover, he shall so-"licit my hand, not offer his."—"Oh! you proud "creature!" exclaimed the Colonel, reinforcing the archness of his eye with a twist of his lips: "but, my dear girl, make allowance for a soldier.—"You remember how Henry the Fifth courted the "Princess Catherine; it was 'Kate, will you marry

" me ?' So I say, Emily ! will you marry me ?"—" I " protest," said Emily, smiling, " I do not see where " the comparison lies : but as I will not suppose " that Colonel Spicer means to jest on such a sub- " ject, I must beg him to desist." Col. Spicer had too favourable an opinion of his person and pretensions to believe this answer sincere ; and he naturally enough ascribed it to the usual artifice of the sex, who love to be courted. He therefore resolved to address her with the fire of an ardent lover ; and, falling on his knee, again seized her hand : " Never, " never, will I desist, oh loveliest of women," cried he, " till you consent to make me the happiest of " men. Charming Emily, my heart adores you : " for mercy's sake give me one encouraging look. " Nay, struggle not to rob me of this heavenly " prize ; it must, it shall be mine :" saying which he forced her hand to his lips, and, in spite of her endeavours to rescue it from his gripe, imprinted several kisses on it. " Sir," said Emily, blushing as she rose and left the arbour, " having requested " you in vain to desist, I am at a loss what to say or " how to act, but my father will instruct me." This the Colonel interpreted into a declaration in his favour, and, leering with his wonted archness, accompanied her back to the house, determined to take the hint of making a regular proposal to Aubrey.

An opportunity occurred that very morning ; for Emily, on going in, having retired to her own chamber, Colonel Spicer stood lounging at the garden door of the sitting-room, where the painters were still occupied in their studies, and Aubrey coming in shortly after, the Colonel invited him to a stroll in the garden. Having formally made his proposal, he stared at Aubrey with a conscious smile, raising the brow of his right eye, and diminishing the sight of the left one, betokening his sense of the delight he

had given. Prepared by his own observation, as well as by his conversations with Mrs. Aubrey for such a proposal, Aubrey received it with a complacent smile, thanked the Colonel for the honour he did his daughter, and said he would consult her without delay on the subject. "I thought it "very amiable in her," said Col. Spicer, "that "she referred me to you, and would not give me "an answer without your consent. Now most girls "are delighted to encourage lovers without the "knowledge of their parents."—"Not most, I "hope, Colonel," replied Aubrey, "since it would "be giving good grounds to suspect, after mar- "riage, that they would encourage admirers with- "out the knowledge of their husbands."—"Faith! "I believe you are right," cried the Colonel; "and if there is any dependence to be placed upon "the marriage vow, it must be among those who "have in the first instance been true to the ties "of nature. Emily is the girl for me; no other on "earth should tempt me to marry."—"Let her "marry when she may," replied her father, "it "will not, I think, be her fault if her husband be "not happy." He then promised to inform Colonel Spicer of the result of his conversation with Emily in a day or two, and the Colonel took his leave.

Aubrey was surprised to hear that Emily had referred her lover to him, as it was in a certain degree giving him encouragement; he wished she had not done it, being perfectly satisfied that it was not her intention; and he was not displeased to learn from her that the idea of reference was the suggestion of the Colonel's vanity, for that she had purposely given him an opportunity to speak, that she might get rid of his ridiculous attentions. "My dear "Emily," said Aubrey, "you have often heard me "express my sentiments generally on marriage; I

" have now to speak of it particularly as it relates to
" yourself. My affection for you leads me to wish
" that we may be together as long as I live; and I
" am certain that if you marry a man according to
" your own taste, my wish will be gratified: the
" man on whom you can bestow the affection of a
" wife cannot fail to make me love him as a son;
" and your giving him your hand will but strengthen
" our union. To such a man it would be real hap-
" piness to see you united; but where is he to be
" found? Not certainly in Colonel Spicer! I know
" it, my love, and such good fortune is hardly to be
" expected. But if the bliss which our hearts aim
" at is not attainable, we ought not to refuse consi-
" deration to motives less exquisite in their influ-
" ence. I put Colonel Spicer out of the question;
" but, should your hand be solicited by one possess-
" ed of good nature, virtue, and an independent for-
" tune, I could form a hope, my Emily, that you
" would not despise that plain happiness which re-
" sults from the discharge of domestic duties. You
" remember that I have always endeavoured to im-
" press upon you the necessity of moderating ex-
" pectation, to look forward to the end of your life,
" however long or short it may be, and to place your
" hope of happiness on the rectitude of your mind,
" and the utility of your existence. It is one thing
" to marry a man who does not merit your love, and
" another to accept of one who has not excited
" admiration. It frequently happens, that by inter-
" course we come to love those who at first appear
" not so attractive as those we admire; and not
" rarely dislike the objects of our readier prepossess-
" sions. In the choice of a husband therefore, my
" dear Emily, if the heart of a young woman be dis-
" engaged, I think she would not do wrong to enter
" upon the marriage state with the mild sober views

" of tranquil hope, domestic virtue, and religious
" faith. I say, my love, that it would perhaps ap-
" pear in the end more desirable than those matches
" which are formed on that excessive sensibility that
" renders two people idols in the eyes of each other,
" absorbs the faculties, and chains the soul with pas-
" sion. What think you?"—" I think," replied
Emily, " that a woman who had no prior attach-
" ment would be happy with a good man, and would
" soon love him as her husband; yet it would cer-
" tainly be better if she felt a preference for him be-
" fore she married; and she must by no means have
" the slishtest prior attachment. But to marry Col.
" Spicer——" —" I have told you, my dear girl,
" that he is out of the question—but tell me, have
" you perceived no particular signs of regard in any
" other person answering the object of my remarks?"
—" No, indeed, papa. Do you suppose there is any
" such person?"—" I do, Emily."—" Indeed!—
" Then you are mistaken."—" Among the young
" men whom you occasionally see here, and at other
" houses, there is certainly one more than com-
" monly partial to you."—" You can't mean Mr.
" Rowley, papa?"—" You guess well at least, my
" love."—" Dear me! with all his goodness of heart
" and friendly disposition, I dare say he no more
" thinks of me as a wife than Arthur does of Miss
" Spicer."—" Should you be mistaken, Emily;
" should he have formed an attachment for you—"
Emily turned pale—" could you with pleasure re-
" ceive his addresses?"—" I have no thought of
" marriage at all—I prefer a single life—I never
" can be so happy as with you and mamma—"
—" Rowley, my love, is independent in his cir-
" cumstances, and a good young man—he lives
" near us—I know it is only his diffidence that re-
" strains him from declaring his affection to you—

" in short, Emily, he has told me so." Poor Emily was ready to sink. " I like Mr. Rowley very much, but " I feel no preference for him."—" Have you any " objection to him?"—" Only that I have no pre- " ference for him:—yes, another—he has fortune, " and you, my dear papa, have it not in your power " to give me a portion."—" A man of liberal mind, " such as Rowley, will look for my Emily's portion in " her soul; the objection would otherwise be unan- " swerable. But I will urge you no farther now— " take a little time to think of it—the decision must " be entirely your own—if it require persuasion " from me, there is an end to it. I shall never think " of insuring you a support at the expense of your " peace of mind. I will not at present let Rowley " know that I have spoken to you on the subject; " but as for Colonel Spicer, I will immediately send " him our conclusive thanks. You must, however, " treat him with great civility wherever you meet." —" Certainly; but he is a very disagreeable crea- " ture, and always looks impudently." Aubrey ob- served, that he would probably now be less at Mari- ton than ever; and Emily most devoutly prayed it might be so.

CHAPTER XLII.

A breakfast at Spicer-hall—Another on the same day at the parsonage—Emily's successful study of self-command—She argues with herself in favour of Mr. Rowley—Result of her argument—Sensitive appears in a new light.

Pride, from whatever stock it shoot, from wealth or birth, from arrogated consequence, or puffed-up vanity, never makes allowance for the feelings of others; but swells with rage and resentment at the

slightest crossing of its own. The whole Spicer family knew the Colonel's intention to offer himself to Emily; they were well founded in the arithmetic of a plum, acquainted with its process in the science of society, and penetrated with its buoyant principle: they had learned that Aubrey, though a man of family, had become dependent; and that his daughters had little or no expectations: they took it for granted that young women, in such a situation, were ready to catch at the first common offer; and it never entered their heads that the all-accomplished Bob could possibly be rejected. The Colonel, being the hopes of the family, had no wish which father and mother, brother and sister did not combine to gratify.

When he first made known his serious intentions respecting Emily, Eudoxia thought he might have chosen better; but she soon saw that her brother was swayed by something more powerful than her opinion, and she joined with the rest of her family in fanning his flame. Old Spicer had not only purchased his rank in the army, but given him a great allowance, and proposed, whenever he settled, to make over to him one of the estates he had purchased in the country; so that not only the man was thought irresistible, but his prospects most tempting. When therefore next morning at breakfast a letter from Aubrey was announced, Miss Eudoxia became playful, and starting up snatched it from the footman. The Colonel kept his seat with all the *sang-froid* of certainty, while his sister held the letter towards him just out of his reach. A smile of conceit and consequence spread from Mr. Spicer through the whole family to Billy, and was reflected by the muscles of Gosling. The Colonel's had a mixture of *nonchalance*, supported by regular oscillations of the head from shoulder to shoulder; and

Eudoxia's had a degree of her own dear brother's archness as she waved the letter before him.

"Well, Bob;" said Mr. Spicer, "I wish you "happy with her, though I shall always think you "mought have done better in the way of fortune." —"Never mind that, Mr. Spicer," said Mrs. Spicer—"you and such as you are fit to make for- "tunes; but Bob and Miss Aubrey are born and "educated to enjoy them: she is a very clever "girl."—"And pray," said Spicer, "which were "you? fit to make, or born and educated to enjoy "a fortune?"—"That brutish speech shan't pre- "vent my enjoying Bob's felicity," said Mrs. Spicer, looking emphatically at Gosling.—"Read, "read, my charming Miss Spicer," said Gosling. "What! open Bob's letter of love, and life, and joy, "and—— Shall I, Bob?" pretending to break the seal—"She certainly is handsomer than I thought "she was—I say, shall I?"—"Do, Eudoxia," replied he, grinning; "you read well."—"Oh! I'll "mind my stops and emphasis:" saying which she opened the letter and began to read: "*Dear Colo-* "*nel!*"—"Eudoxia!" said Mr. Spicer, interrupting her, "always begin a letter by reading the name "at the bottom of it; then go to the date, whether "that's at top or bottom."—"Lord, Mr. Spicer," cried Mrs. Spicer, "hold your tongue, if you can't "say any thing to the purpose. Go on, Eudoxia." —"*Dear Colonel*—" —"Who is the letter from?" said Mr. Spicer. "It is signed, *William Aubrey*, "Sir;" replied Eudoxia. "To be sure—" said Mrs. Spicer—"do you think that Miss Aubrey "would begin, *Dear Colonel?*"—"No, but her bro- "ther mought."—"Mought!" cried Mrs. Spicer —"he mought, mought he, in Gloustershire?"— "I'll not bear this, Mrs. Spicer," said her husband: "I'll—"—"Pray, Sir, hear the letter."—"I will,

" Bob, but——read, Eudoxia."—" *Dear Colonel!* " *Your good opinion of my daughter, and the honour* " *you do us all, in proposing an alliance, you cannot* " *but be sensible are highly flattering*——" —" How " well expressed that sentence is!" said Mrs. Spicer, looking emphatically at Gosling, who smiled his sympathy, and gently nodded his reply.—Eudoxia continued; " *Pray accept my thanks*——" —" There's some gratitude in that," said Mr. Spicer. Eudoxia went on—" *Your fortune, your* " *rank; indeed in every respect you know yourself to* " *be unexceptionable*——" —" I always liked Au- " brey," said the Colonel; " I shall certainly treat " him through life with the respect due to a father." —Eudoxia read on—" *Miss Aubrey feels as she* " *ought on this occasion*——" —" Oh, the lovely " girl!" exclaimed the Colonel, in ecstacy.—" *And,* " *superior,*" continued Eudoxia, reading, " *to the* " *petty delight of trifling with the admiration of any* " *man, she has requested me unequivocally to declare* " *to you that*——" —" What's this?" cried Miss Spicer, reddening—" *That*—" —" I can't believe " my eyes,"—" *That she declines your addresses.*"

The faces of the Spicer-group underwent a very sudden alteration: the smile of conceit and consequence fled, and made way for frowns, rage, and all the marks of mortified pride and disappointment.—The Colonel thought his sister had jokingly put her own words for Aubrey's, and desired her not to jest. " Jest!" cried Eudoxia: " I shall burst—an Au- " brey refuse a Spicer! a beggar refuse a coach?" " Is it possible?" cried Mr. Spicer: " The daugh- " ter of the curate of Mariton refuse my son! You " deserve it, Bob, for thinking of a paltry baby not " worth a shilling—but let her go—let her rot on a " dunghill."—" Always vulgar, or it would not be " you, Mr. Spicer;" cried Mrs. Spicer, " yet I

" could almost swear myself to think of this weak, " ignorant, foolish minx." Gosling agreed with the lady in a solemn, sympathetic look and shrug.— " And for her father," continued she, " to consent " to her exposing herself, and to write such non- " sense!" Aubrey's letter concluded with a few softening expressions, which the Spicers had no patience to read; but continued venting their fury in the most abusive terms, and vowing vengeance against the whole generation of vipers. Mrs. Spicer ordered her coach, that she might immediately go and expose them to all her friends, and insist upon their giving them up. Miss Spicer determined to find a way of showing them the difference. Mr. Spicer swore, rolled his eyes, and went about his business at the Quarter-Sessions at Loughborough. Billy bethought himself of taking a cool practice on his tenor-fiddle; and Mr. Gosling sympathised in Mrs. Spicer's visits. The Colonel himself was the most collected under this unheard-of, desperate affront. Whatever might be the motive of it, he had not the slightest suspicion of its arising from a defect of attractions; and he promised himself in the course of time a very pleasant revenge, both upon the girl and the parson.

In a very different manner was the morning spent at the Parsonage. Aubrey's understanding justified Emily's refusal of the Colonel; but at the same time he thought it a subject on which the greatest delicacy was to be observed. It was mentioned at breakfast before Sensitive, for he was considered as a bosom friend; but it was determined that it should not be breathed abroad to a single creature, that not the least notice should be taken of it at the Spicers', and that the Colonel should be received with greater hospitality than he had ever been, that he might be the less sensible of his disappointment.

Before breakfast was over, Aubrey received a packet of letters from Arthur and Edmund, which, while they excited astonishment, dissipated all his fears for the former, and restored to him that perfect complacency of soul which had been disturbed by the account given him by Dr. Murray of his intercourse with Lady Sudley. Edmund said nothing in his letter of their adventure at Grant's cottage; but, generally, that from circumstances which had happened on their journey, his friend had been so convinced of the worthlessness of the person who had enthralled him, that he had voluntarily rejoiced in the opportunity of giving her up; and that it had not been necessary for him to use Aubrey's knowledge of his son's secret, as a spur to an effort of virtue; for that he had himself, unbiassed, resolved upon all his father wished. "When at last I told "him," said Edmund, "that his secret was known "to you, and that you had commissioned me to "speak to him on the subject, he expressed his "shame in the most amiable manner; and re-"proached himself for his conduct to you in such "terms as increased my love and admiration of him." Edmund dwelled on the praise of Arthur, and declared him to be, in his opinion, one of the noblest of men; a friend of whom he should ever be proud, and for whom he would sacrifice life itself. The warm effusions of his pen delighted the whole circle; Emily not the least. Edmund likewise gave a short account of his adventure with Lord Sudley; and expressed the pleasure the arrival of his friend had spread through Eden-bower. Arthur's letter to his father was couched in the warmest terms of gratitude and affection: he confessed his error in the most ingenuous manner, without casting much blame on Lady Sudley; and was not behind-hand with Edmund in eulogy. He extolled his friend's

courage and magnanimity in the adventure with Lord Sudley; and gave a more particular account of it than Edmund himself had done. Besides his letter to Aubrey, Arthur had written to his mother, to his sisters, to Arthur-William. Fond of his family, he had always something particular to say to each. In that to Emily, he painted but too warmly, however justly, the character of his friend. His sister, intent on the regulating of her emotions, had, ever since her conversation with her mother, resolved to consider Edmund as her brother; but such unbounded praise, and such a description as Arthur's of his rescuing Lord Sudley from the hands of the villains, were adapted to shake her plan. She was sensible of a too lively impression, and she redoubled her efforts to oppose it. In these she was assisted by her mother, who frequently conversed with her on her own state when, at the death of her father, she and Mrs. Melvil retired to the Cambridgeshire Cottage; where she devoted her time to the improvement of her mind, looking forward beyond this world, in which happiness is so uncertain, except as it results from a consciousness of endeavouring to please that Being who has thought proper to place us here. Emily reaped great advantage from the consideration of her mother's trials; and was in a short time so much mistress of the passions and emotions of the mind, that she could rely upon her strength in making them yield obedience to reason.

While this amiable girl was thus perfecting herself in the practice of self-command, her refusal of Colonel Spicer became the subject of conversation in every company; most people were surprised that Aubrey should suffer a daughter to be guilty of such folly; and some formed a strong party with Mrs. Spicer to make the family know themselves. Readiness of inquiry was superseded by formality of sa-

lutation; to this succeeded frowns; rude laughter was next in rotation; and at length the very church was forsaken by the party, and the Divinity was not worshiped, because the daughter of the Curate had declined the addresses of Colonel Spicer. Such is the progress of the passions in some bosoms.

When it was fully ascertained that Emily's heart was untouched by the gay and gallant Colonel, a man far more deserving of her, one whom she highly respected, Rowley, the good, the gentle Rowley, summoned greater courage, dared to hope, and even to show his hope by assiduities from which he had hitherto abstained. Emily, convinced that her acceptance of him would please her father, endeavoured to persuade herself to act on that principle. She revolved his arguments, recollected that she had assented to the doctrine of love after marriage, and confirmed herself in it; but when she severely examined her heart, she found, that though she could command the passions which assailed it, she had not the heart itself to bestow. She could banish the thought of Edmund as a husband; but to him, and only to him could she ever yield the love of a wife. Had she never seen him she would have married Mr. Rowley; but, conscious of the preference he possessed in her bosom, to give her hand to Rowley would be a crime. She resolved to live a single life, and generously to put an end to suspense without delay in the mind of so worthy a young man; she therefore begged Aubrey not to postpone assuring him of her esteem, and of her inability to direct her heart according to his wishes. Aubrey secretly lamented her decision, but attempted not to bias it either by word or look. He well knew that love was never the result of advice; he was satisfied with having formed his child's heart to virtue, and with steering it away from danger; but

to urge her to a marriage not freely chosen, or even to induce her to it by her affection for himself, far from conceiving it to be the part of a parent, he accounted to be morally a parricide. He softened the answer to Rowley with assurances of his esteem and affection; and Rowley proved himself worthy of those assurances, by resolving to conquer his passion, so that he might not relinquish the enjoyment of the friendship and society of the family. He had, however, too much sensibility to render this an easy task; and when he received the message, he bade Aubrey farewell for two years, which he determined to spend in visiting foreign countries. Aubrey applauded, and blessed him.

While Emily was thus captivating and refusing lovers, the little god was slily and silently folding a net round a heart for her sister. Arthurina had hitherto been accounted too much a child to engage the attention of admirers, though her sprightliness made her the delight of all who knew her. Reared with the same principles as her sister, there was no difference between them in the solid foundations of character; but in the lighter superstructure nature had varied their formation, both as to face and imagination. Arthurina, with her dark eyes and volatile nerves, had more of the comic in her than Emily; and she had a vein of mimickry which Aubrey had found some difficulty in restraining. The acuteness of her eye, which so readily led her to mark and represent the manners of people, found its way to her pencil: she made accurate sketches from nature, and took striking likenesses. In improving this genius, Sensitive unwarily became alive to the charms of his scholar. She entertained him with her vivacity; and now and then ventured, even before Aubrey, to take off the oddities of some of their acquaintance. She one day told Sensitive a story

with grimace, action, and tone so exactly suited to the characters, that she kept him in a continual laughter, a thing very unusual with Charles, till she drew him in that state, while he, sitting opposite, supposed her on a different work. Another time she told him a sad story, with a very melancholy face, in which the lines of his countenance sympathising, she took him in a doleful air. Sensitive became daily more and more charmed; and, as the time approached when he purposed leaving Mariton, he discovered that Arthurina had tied him by the heart. He made one or two feeble efforts to disengage it: he considered her in the light of a child, to whom it would be improper to talk of love; and he compared their ages; he was four-and-twenty, she but fifteen. These considerations were very trivial ones indeed to oppose to the power of whose influence he was sensible. At fifteen a girl is in her sixteenth year; and a very short time soon removes the impropriety of talking of love; and as to the difference of nine years, it would never be more were they to live a century: the seeming disparity was therefore entirely owing to the early stage of her life; at twenty-five and thirty-four there would be no disparity at all. Love soon settled these points in Sensitive's mind, but did not impel him to act irrationally. He still resolved to say nothing of his passion to Arthurina for some time to come, but to declare himself to Aubrey; and, if he met his approbation, to return to Mariton, and be assiduous in the cultivation of his little painter. In consequence of this resolution, he took an opportunity, when walking alone with Aubrey, to open his mind to him. "My dear friend," said he, "I find "I have been dangerously occupied at Mariton. I "have escaped all the active flirtations of beauty "elsewhere, to be imperceptibly worked out of my

"heart here by a child. Yes, Aubrey, I feel for "that little girl of your's what I never felt before "for any woman;—a desire to unite our fate for "life." Aubrey smiled. "She is," said he, "a very engaging and amiable child, my dear "Charles, and in time will have all the qualities ne-"cessary for a good wife, if we do not turn her head "by giving her too soon the thoughts of a husband." —"And yet," replied Sensitive, "with all her viva-"city, she has more judgment and forethought than "many women twice her age. May I, Aubrey, in-"dulge the thought, and endeavour gradually to "win her affections? My fortune, you know, is "competent to the comforts of life; and, should I "be fortunate enough to gain her heart, I trust "there would be no fear of her happiness." Aubrey had not forgotten Mr. Cowper's account of Sensitive's situation in respect to the securities to which he had given his name; and he had, ever since that account, considered him rather as a poor than a rich man; but he imagined that he would save some portion of his property; and Aubrey was not a man to be looking out for rich husbands for his daughters, whom he had taught to distinguish what was estimable in men, independent of the idea of marriage, in which, however, he invariably inculcated competence as an indispensable requisite. He was delighted with his friend's proposal, and consented to it with a rapture hardly inferior to that of Sensitive, on having his hope encouraged by the father of his little conquering artist.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Melford—Arthur no flint—Opens his heart to Edmund, and leaves Eden-bower—Suspicion as to the two men who attacked Lord Sudley—Arthur arrives at Mariton—Conversation with Aubrey—Time helped forward—Death of the Rector of Mariton.

Time ambled both at Mariton and Melford; and at the latter place Love was no less busy than at the former. Mr. Cowper, by prudent management, had gradually augmented his little estate; the chief of which consisted of rich pasture lands, whence his cows were enabled to supply the dairy of Eden-bower with that produce which not only contributed a comfortable support to the affectionate family he had adopted, but annually added something to a store devoted to give in time an independence to Edmund and his sister. A part of the land Mr. Cowper had turned to the uses of tillage; but this was little more than enough to supply himself with his own grain. The harvest of these few fields was begun on Edmund's return with Arthur to Melford; and it being likewise the case in many other spots throughout the beautiful vale of Melford, the whole country seemed alive. The friends, accompanied by Mr. Cowper, Mrs. Smyth, and Harriet, were constantly in the fields. Arthur and Edmund assisted in binding up the sheaves of corn, in placing them in parcels, in carting them, and in raising the mows: the former daily inhaled copious draughts of new health, and, before he had been a week at Melford, was as well as he had ever been in his life.

Prepared by Mr. Cowper's account to admire Melford, Arthur was in no degree disappointed: the country, the village, and the villagers, all answered

his description of them, though many years had flowed into the ocean of eternity since Melford was the scene of the events he had related. Old Cowsel, and the venerable Grey, who officiated at the interment of the remains of the once lovely Fanny Ross, were no longer enliveners of the rustic meetings, and preservers of village innocence and piety: they had long since played their part, and left their aged limbs to rest in earth. But another venerable Grey, the nephew of the former, filled the pulpit of Melford, and guarded the transmitted spirit of the rising generation; and another worthy Cowsel existed in Dick, who was father of a large family; and who, seconded by his wife, increased the little patrimony to which he had succeeded. Susan, once the companion of Fanny Ross, had also long been happily settled with her husband, and had children grown up. The neighbourhood had been increased by the residence of several families of middling fortunes, and altogether Melford was considerably improved since those days, when Mr. Cowper transformed Mrs. Ross's cottage into Eden-bower.

Arthur and Edmund were delighted to ramble here as they had done at Mariton, and when they left the harvest fields they extended their excursions in every direction; to Bristol, to Glocester, and sometimes, crossing the Severn, to the Cambrian hills, to indulge in the romantic prospects they afforded. The sweet glow of friendship accompanied them wherever they went, and was heightened by conversations on that bewitching subject to which their established confidence had given full scope. No wonder that it soon became of mutual importance, when Arthur, almost fascinated by the charms of a picture, found in his friend's sister those charms realized, and animated by a soul and intellect formed to secure that lasting happiness which can alone re-

sult from the union of health of mind and body. Harriet was a lovely girl, tall and well-shaped, with an expressive countenance, good sense, and musical talents; a combination that convinced Arthur that his heart was not of the flinty nature he had accidentally heard it described to be; it was as tender as his friend's, when the object of tenderness united worth and beauty. Arthur, however, found no encouragement from Cowper, Harriet, or her mother; while kindness and affection were fully manifested, every degree of passion was discountenanced and carefully guarded against. Harriet was never alone with Arthur, and her uncle, both in general discourse and in friendly admonitions seemingly unpremeditated, persuaded his young friend to shield his heart against the softer emotions of the mind, as they only unfitted a man who had to struggle through life for the exertions he would find it necessary to make. Arthur therefore had no resource but in confessing to Edmund, and talking with him of their sisters. Reflection taught him that he had even less pretensions than his friend to think of marriage; he had fallen from splendid hopes to the necessity of choosing a profession, and that profession was yet to be learned; Smyth deserted at his birth and without prospects, as he grew up, was daily rising to independence. If Edmund therefore were right in attempting to conquer his love, how much more was it incumbent upon him to smother his. After speaking one day with rapture of Harriet, he concluded with telling Edmund, that he was certain the warmth of his attachment would not be pleasing to his uncle, and that though he should continue to love her as long as he lived, he would never open his lips upon the subject to any one of the family but Edmund himself, unless circumstances turned out sufficiently favourable to convince him that a proposal from him would not be heard

with pain. "We are unfortunate fellows, my dear "Arthur," said Edmund; "I plainly see that an "acknowledgment of the feelings of either of us "would create unhappiness to our dearest friends; "let us therefore suppress, or at least conceal them "for the present from all but ourselves. When you "return to Mariton, talk often of me, and kindly to "Miss Aubrey without betraying my passion to her. "I on my part will make you the subject of conver- "sation with Harriet, and she shall not forget you. "Hereafter something may occur to render our si- "lence unnecessary, and we shall be doubly re- "warded for it."—"This, my dear Edmund," re- plied Arthur, "is a noble resolution: I will follow "your example as far as I am able, but I cannot "help thinking that some fortunate though unfore- "seen circumstance may arise from opening my "mind to my father, and it is very probable in your "case. As for mine, he loves me so well that I am "sure whatever he could do to make me happy "would be done, and if he advises me to relinquish "all hope of Miss Smyth, his confidence and friend- "ship will be a great support to my heart." Thus did these ingenuous young men, safe from the cor- rupt examples of profligate associates, console each other and render themselves worthy a return of love, by resolving to suppress it where it tended to involve the objects of it in distress. To conceal it, however, from the keen eye of experience was not easy; Cowper soon detected the seeds of a passion which, in a double sense, had been so fatal to his own repose; he pointed them out to his sister, and at the same time the necessity of not suffering them to take root. To this they paid the greatest attention, and from the cheerfulness of Arthur, who in a guiltless attachment felt no causes of melancholy, and from Edmund's prudence, they flattered themselves that

they were successful. Harriet too, whose early lessons had been no less impressed than Emily's, displayed an affectionate kindness for Arthur without discovering to him any mark of such an attachment as might serve to keep alive a flame of which her mother and uncle were afraid.

After spending three weeks happily at Melford, Arthur took leave of Eden-bower, delighted with the time he had spent there, and possessing all the love and esteem he deserved. Mr. Cowper and Edmund accompanied him as far as Glocester. At Warwick he visited his friends, and heard that Lord Sudley attributed to him his rescue from the assassins who attempted his life, ascribing Edmund's reference for his name to the steward as a point of delicacy on the part of Arthur. The two men who attacked him had not been discovered, but were suspected to be the father and brother of a girl who having been induced by bribery the year before, to sacrifice her virtue to Lord Sudley, had died of shame and grief. Her brother had come from a distant part of England, to spend a little time with his friends, had dropped some threatening words, and the very morning of the attack, he set out to return to his parish, accompanied by his father. Arthur himself thought this very likely; and in talking of the affair, took pains to give Edmund all the praise of the brave action by which Lord Sudley had been saved; neither at Warwick nor Coventry, did he hear any thing of Lady Sudley, and he arrived safe at the Parsonage, glowing with renovated health and family affection. His reception was delightful to his heart; Aubrey and his mother did not appear to know that he had ever fallen into error, and their joy on beholding his healthy looks and unclouded countenance, was a lively pledge of their undiminished love. His sisters and Arthur-William press-

ed him in their arms, and Sensitive shook him cordially by the hand. He was informed of all that had passed at Mariton in his absence, and he recounted the pleasures he had enjoyed at Melford, fondly dwelling on the virtues of his friend Edmund, and on the loveliness of his sister. Sensitive's sketches of the country, and the likenesses he had taken of the family gratified him highly, and he was himself soon added to the group. Charles staid at the Parsonage full ten days after his arrival, made him his friend, and declared to him his intentions respecting Arthurina, if in the course of his next visit he had reason to believe she would be happy with him. Arthur was made aware of the alteration that had taken place among some of his acquaintance, in consequence of Emily's declining Colonel Spicer's addresses, and it was not long before he perceived it himself; but as the supporters of the Spicer animosity were not the most select of the inhabitants, he easily concurred with the rest of his family in bearing the mortification stoically. The Colonel himself, holding it beneath him to shew any anger on the occasion, had set out soon after for London, leaving his mother and sister to frown down the Aubreys; but unhappily for those two accomplished ladies, the sad effects of their ire were felt only at Spicer-hall. At the Parsonage, new happiness poured in with Arthur's return in perfect health, and it was only interrupted by the departure of the amiable Charles Sensitive, who, however, promised to pay Mariton another visit ere long.

The very morning that he left them, Arthur had a conversation with Aubrey, on all that had passed in his mind previous to his sickness, and since his recovery. His father expatiated with warmth on the nature of criminal attachments generally, but with mildness on that of which he had repented.

When Arthur avowed his attachment to Edmund's sister, Aubrey, far from repressing it, anxiously assured him that nothing could give him greater satisfaction than to see them united, at the same time, he applauded his resolution in forbearing to speak of his feelings to Miss Smyth. "Competence you "know, my dear Arthur," said he, "is indispens- "able to a happy marriage; but whether that com- "petence arise from patrimonial fortune, or from "industry, is perhaps of little importance. The "far greater part of mankind support their families "by the latter. With your education and the sen- "timents you have imbibed, a mode of living be- "comes necessary which alters the nature of com- "petence. The industry that will supply the wants "of animal existence, will not afford that mainte- "nance to the mind which no gentleman can dis- "pense with in the rearing of a family, and whose "means therefore must reach beyond the provision "of *meat, fire, and clothes.* The intellectual ne- "cessaries of life, however, fortunately require no "great extension of the idea of competence; all that "is requisite to inform the understanding and refine "the soul, may be obtained within almost as narrow "a compass as the common comforts of physical "existence; it is only the gratification of unlimited "passions that demands a fund of wealth. For a "single man much less is required than for a family. "You have not this competence, Arthur; neither "has Miss Smyth, and yet I do not bid you resign "all hope of a union; because, having youth and "abilities in your favour, you may, by success in a "profession, attain a sufficient income to justify "your marriage; but this is all the encouragement "I can give you. Determine soon on some em- "ployment; be patient, and resolve nobly not to "entangle the object of your affection in a fruitless

" passion; be silent on the subject to her, till you " are certain of maintaining her with comfort."— " Oh, Sir," said Arthur, " you are so good, so in- " dulgent, there is no exertion I will not make to " convince you of its being the first desire of my " mind to be worthy of you: but it is a long time to " look forward before my ability to maintain her can " be ascertained, and in the meantime I may lose " her."—" It is a hazard you must run to be worthy " of her," replied Aubrey, " but you are both " young, and your minds are probably so congenial, " that without any formal contract you need not " despair of being happy. At all events, it is ab- " solutely necessary, that you should bend your " mind on studies that may enable you to ensure " the competence on which your hopes depend: do " this, my dear boy, and leave the rest to Provi- " dence." Arthur declared his firm resolution to follow Aubrey's advice, and then in the most deli- cate and anxious manner, he communicated his dis- covery of his friend Edmund's passion for Emily, and strongly pleaded with his father to be propiti- ous to it, and to endeavour to settle an alliance with Mr. Cowper. " Edmund, my dear Sir," said he, " is already possessed of the power of insuring a " competence. Besides a fund of learning and in- " formation superior to those of most young men of " the first families, he has attained a degree of prac- " tical knowledge of agriculture, that will enable " him to undertake the management of cattle and " land, and as soon as his uncle settles him there is " not a doubt that he will thrive."—" This is true," said Aubrey, " but consider that Edmund has al- " ready a family to support. Cowper's circumstances " are limited, that is to say, though by his prudence " and perseverance rendered equal to the mainte- " nance of the present number he supports, by no

" means adequate to the burden of an additional fa-
" mily: he will therefore justly, in gradually placing
" his nephew in his own shoes, expect of him the
" support of Mrs. and Miss Smyth before every
" other consideration. I know not any man I should
" prefer for Emily's husband, and I am not without
" a suspicion that she is of my mind, as she refused
" Rowley, who is in every respect unexceptionable:
" but then she hardly knows it herself, for I am sure
" that she would, like you, communicate all her sen-
" timents: besides, she is too sensible, to be led by
" her heart in an affection of this nature, before she
" is convinced that she is first the object of it. I
" will candidly tell you my sentiments: this double
" alliance would make me happy; but I do not think
" it easily attainable, at least for years to come. On
" the one hand, you must be master of a profession;
" and on the other, I must be able to add something
" to Edmund's farm for Emily. But you have all
" youth on your side, and I see nothing impossible
" in effecting it hereafter. You must be diligent,
" and I, when presented to the Rectory, will not be
" very slow in saving a portion for our beloved
" Emily: all I ask is patience and prudence; that
" you will do nothing in a hurry, and nothing at all
" that will lay a foundation for repentance. Be, for
" the present, friends as much, and lovers as little
" as possible, and, as I said before, leave the result
" to Providence: many things may occur to acce-
" lerate our wishes, and if it should be ultimately
" necessary to relinquish them, there will be no en-
" gagements to enthral and perplex us, and render
" misfortune still more calamitous."—" Your senti-
" ments, my dear father," said Arthur, " are so
" just, and expressed so kindly, that to oppose them
" would be insanity or insensibility. As for me, I
" fully resign myself to your guidance, I will follow

"your advice, be my lot what it may: but I know "that Edmund with all his determination to do and "say nothing that can tend to create uneasiness to "you or his uncle, will lead a miserable life, unless "he has a hope of making Emily his own."—"I "should be afraid," replied Aubrey, "to give him "encouragement, and it is impossible but through "Mr. Cowper: the best, therefore, we can do at "present is, to let matters remain as they are." Arthur assented; and the father and son, with the delightful feelings resulting from candour and love, joined their beloved group.

When Sensitive left Mariton the season was far advanced, and the commencing fall of leaves proclaimed the approach of winter. In spite of the indignant family of the rejected Colonel, the hospitality prevailing at the Parsonage, and the personal attractions of the Aubreys, drew together many large, social parties; and even some of those who first espoused the resentment of the Spicers appeared to forget the part they had taken, and were well received. Nothing remarkable occurred during the winter: Arthur prosecuted his studies with unusual perseverance; the friendship with Cowper and the Smyths was maintained by pleasing correspondence, and all mention of love was abstained from. Unfortunately the bills brought in for the expences of the family were not diminished; and the Aubreys again resolved to discover where they erred, and to make those retrenchments that were absolutely necessary; for, the rate at which they were now living was not even less than they would be entitled to do were Aubrey actually the rector of the parish. The hospitality which distinguished the Parsonage had exhausted the stock in the cellar; and it was determined that some plan should be adopted to diminish

the consumption of such expensive articles; but certainly Christmas, when general festivities prevailed over the country, was not the time to deliberate either on that plan, or the means of putting it into execution; therefore, a store similar to the former was ordered for the present, and the discussion of the cellar plan was adjourned till the spring. This fresh supply was put in upon credit, as Aubrey had drawn the greater part of the remaining seven hundred pounds out of the hands of his banker, to discharge the Michaelmas bills and some extra accounts which had not been foreseen. The taking of credit was at first attended with painful reflections, but then Aubrey had been hitherto a good customer, and should he be under the necessity of living a year or even two on credit, it would be no injury to the person with whom he dealt; for, besides his past punctuality in large payments, he could always make amends by an addition of interest, and future favours, when his situation enabled him. The whole winter was spent agreeably, and perhaps not the less so, that the Spicers were the greater part of it in London. The village was not troubled by the castle ghosts, which had desisted from appearing, ever since the hue and cry that was made after them, but the villagers never forgot the apparitions, and the castle seldom had visitors. Several trips were made to Leicester on invitations from Dr. Searle, in whom the Aubreys, every visit, observed an evident decrease of bodily strength as well as mental failure, nor did the prospect of the rectory diminish their sorrow for his decay, because they loved, admired, and venerated him.

When they took leave of him, after spending a week at his house in the beginning of March, they suspected that they should see him no more, and were not surprised towards the end of the month, at

Aubrey's receiving a letter from Mrs. Searle, informing him of the approach of his dissolution, and that he wished to see him. Aubrey repaired to the Newark without delay, and found the worthy old man on the eve of his departure from this world. He was sitting on an easy-chair in his bed-room, and received Aubrey with a smile. He perfectly recollected his friends, and was fully conscious of the awful change he was about to make. "This "indeed is friendly," said he, taking Aubrey's hand, "I wished to bid you farewell before I left "this world, and I would have had our friend Cow- "per meet you on this occasion, but I have sent "for him too late; his sister writes my niece word, "that he is out on one of his excursions: had he "been apprized of my speedy removal, his benevo- "lence would have united with his friendship to "send him hither. However, we shall all meet by "and by, and in the meantime I charge you with "my blessing to him." He then inquired affectionately for Aubrey's family, and prayed for their prosperity and happiness. He paused frequently in speaking, giving his friend an opportunity of making kind and consolatory observations. Not being able to sit up long at a time, he conversed with him in bed, to which he was reconveyed soon after Aubrey came in. He talked of his hopes in another state of existence, with the cheerfulness of certainty. "God," said he, "has graciously granted me a "large portion of temporal life: take it altogether, I "trust it has not been ill spent; with whatever sins "and frailties it may be spotted, I have the strong- "est hope that repentance and a lively faith in the "promises of the Saviour of the world, will include "me in the benevolent effects of his great, his glo- "rious passion. I have no heavy crime weighing "on my heart, and when I took the sacrament yes-

" terday, I felt my soul renovated with hope and " heavenly joy. I am now more than content to " die: I have in view the wonders and the bliss of " death: though my heart is too feeble to pant for " them, my spirit does." Mrs. Searle begged him not to exhaust himself—" Well, I will not, my " love," replied he, " and indeed I feel myself " faint. I will sleep a little: we shall perhaps have " another day together to-morrow: if not, I will " pray for you in heaven. Death is not grievous to " those who see God in it." He closed his eyes, and soon fell asleep: he slept sweetly, and awoke no more.

When men die like Dr. Searle, they dispel the gloom of death, and almost show him fair and beautiful. That Power,

> " Whom soft-eyed pity once led down from Heaven,
> Smooths the last bed with pious hope and joy:
> There props feeble Nature, calms all her fears,
> Wakes all her hopes, and animates her faith,
> Till the rapt soul, anticipating Heaven,
> Bursts from the thraldom of incumb'ring clay,
> And on the wing of ecstasy upborne
> Springs into liberty, and light, and life. *"

CHAPTER XLIV.

Dr. Searle's will—State of Aubrey's finances—Arthur's choice of a profession—A letter from Sensitive—Presentation of the rectory—Family affection—Arrival of Sensitive—The Aubreys confirmed at the Parsonage.

THOUGH Dr. Searle was fully matured for Heaven, and his release from earth had been long expected,

* Porteus.

the tear due to departed worth followed him to the grave. Mrs. Searle and Amelia loved their uncle, and lamented his separation from them; but his great age, his virtues, and "his hold on Heaven," presented strong motives of consolation to them and his other friends, and reconciled them to the mandate that called him from them. By the doctor's will the bulk of his property was left to Mrs. Searle and Amelia, and a portion of it was devoted to charitable purposes and friendly legacies. To Aubrey he left all the antique furniture at the Parsonage, with twenty pounds to purchase mourning rings for all the family. To Mr. Cowper he left a sum of one thousand pounds for himself, and another thousand to be disposed of by him according to the spirit of his benevolent plan. Aubrey would have brought Mrs. Aubrey to stay with Mrs. Searle for some time but the latter declined the offer, both as she knew that it would be inconvenient to her to leave her family, and as there was an old friend of her's engaged to come to her; he therefore took an affectionate leave of her, and returned to Mariton.

However affected by the dissolution of the good, friendly, old man, Aubrey was not forgetful of the interest of his family in the reversionary hope of the rectory; and, as soon as the death of the rector could be communicated with certainty, he wrote a letter on the subject to Lord Aynsford, and another to Charles Sensitive. In the first he merely informed his Lordship, that the time was arrived for the performance of his promise: in the other, he begged Sensitive to lose not a moment in learning where the Earl was, that there might be no room left for suspense. At the Parsonage, the grief for the death of Dr. Searle was unfeigned, nor was it incompatible with the pleasing expectations attendant on Aubrey's succession. The Aubreys commemorated his gene-

ral virtues, and dwelt with satisfaction on the particular proofs of his regard to them; but this did not prevent their enjoying the possession of a good, the prospect of which they had contemplated before they knew him. Unassociated in ideas with the death of a friend, nothing could be more fortunate than the presentment to the rectory, at a time when their finances were not only exhausted, but their credit deeply involved. By Christmas, Aubrey had drawn his whole fund out of the hands of his banker, and at Lady-day he was a full quarter in arrear to all his tradesmen, over and above the stock of liquors with which his cellar had been replenished. Could any thing, then, be more providential than the accession of a revenue of twelve hundred a-year? With all their economical resolutions on their arrival at Mariton, they had not been able to live much under the income arising from the rectory; and, what would have become of them in another year had this not fallen in? After praising and lamenting the late incumbent, they congratulated one another on the timely vacancy for his successor, and entered into new resolutions respecting their future expences.

In a few days Aubrey received a letter from Sensitive, informing him that Lord Aynsford was not in the kingdom, but that he was expected shortly; and that Aubrey's letter from Leicester had been immediately forwarded to him by the Earl's agent, whom Sensitive had seen. This intelligence was a little vexatious; but, as the delay produced no doubt, the Aubrey's were easily satisfied to wait with patience the arrival of Lord Aynsford, or his reply to the letter Aubrey had written, which they were sure would be sent as soon as possible. In the mean time, two objects principally engaged Aubrey's attention: a full and exact statement of his affairs, and

the decision of a profession for Arthur. He accordingly called in all his bills of every kind, those in London as well as those in the country, and, on casting up the totals, found himself seven hundred pounds in debt.

With respect to Arthur, having read the elements of theology and several polemic writings, having examined the theories of medicine, and perused some of the works of Sydenham, Mead, Brown, and Cullen, and having gone through the Commentaries of Blackstone with great attention, he declared himself in favour of the law. He said, that divinity and ethics were to him the most captivating studies; he conceived, however, the duty of a minister not only arduous, but, in the present state of society, almost impracticable; and, as a proof, he cited the experience of his father, who, inclined as he was to discharge the pastoral office with the conscientiousness of an apostle, was debarred by the rules of polite conversation from introducing the topics of his profession; and who had learned to consider it as a compliment to himself, that the jests of freethinking and profane talk were abstained from in his presence: and, as to the lower classes of society; those who felt a degree of independence looked with a jealous eye on the claimer of tithes and dues; while the poor, constrained in the presence of a superior, considered the visit of the minister as the intrusion of a spy upon their conduct. Aubrey allowed the justness of Arthur's observations; but, at the same time, remarked, that these difficulties arising from the nature of men in the present state of society, afforded no good reason for turning away from the administration of the divine office, but rather the reverse; for it is to conquer difficulties that men are called upon to undertake it; and, though he himself was not so successful as he wished, yet the

successive ministry of the Greys at Melford was proof of what might be effected by piety and perseverance. He confessed, however, that it was a very serious charge, and that no one should be permitted to take it upon himself who did not feel an ardent desire to be active in promoting the spiritual amelioration of mankind.

Next to divinity and ethics, Arthur was of opinion that the science of medicine was most bewitching: of those the health and salvation of the soul were the objects; of this the health of the body, and the soul's continuance in union with it. It was built upon a variety of knowledge of the most delightful kind: anatomy, botany, chemistry, natural history and philosophy, effects of physical causes on the mind, and of mental ones on the body. A physician, uniting great skill with piety and virtue, was one of the first of characters among men, and participated in an eminent degree of the divine nature; but it was the most difficult of any to form, and the discharge of its duties the most delicate and alarming. In divinity, the responsibility of its professor is not so great, or, rather, the nicety of his judgment is not so important; it is rarely to be attributed to him that the soul sinks into corruption, depravity, and perdition; but the slightest error in a medical case often confirms disease or extinguishes life itself. Medical professors, who practise in defiance of conscious ignorance and inability, may give themselves what title they please, but their true appellation is registered in Heaven, and not unfrequently in the calendars of state prisons. Aubrey thought that Arthur refined too much. It was rare, if ever, that men unqualified for the practice of physic obtained a diploma; and, on dubious cases, physicians had always opportunities of consulting one another. He thought there was a better objection to the pro-

fession than what was advanced by his son, and that was, the reluctance of the sick to trust themselves to any but those advanced in life, conceiving experience necessary to perfect theory: he was therefore content that Arthur should pass over the profession of medicine.

The law was a wide field, a profession in which conscience was not even required to have any operation short of the bench; for it had been an established maxim from the ages of antiquity, that every lawyer was bound, right or wrong, to do his best for his client. It was a profession both profitable and honourable, and the members of it were sometimes seen to make their way early: Arthur, therefore, delighted with the style of the Commentaries, and with the fund of information he had obtained from them, decided for the bar: nor was Aubrey disappointed; for, of the three learned professions, he thought Arthur best suited to the law. The expence, indeed, of studying the various branches of it would be heavy, but he should now be enabled to make that exertion; and it was determined that his name should be immediately entered at Lincoln's Inn, where he should attend his terms, though for the next two years of his life he should study at Cambridge; after which he should reside in town, to attend offices and the courts, and be called to the bar when he was four-and-twenty, a proper age to commence his career. The time appeared not very long to Arthur, when he thought of it as preparatory to a profession: he sometimes, however, combined it in idea with Harriet; then did it seem an age; but, in heaving a sigh to love, he resolved by perseverance to be worthy of it.

A fortnight had now elapsed since the death of Dr. Searle, and there were no tidings of Lord Aynsford. Aubrey had preached a pathetic funeral ser-

mon in honour of his late friend, and cared not how soon he preached on his own induction; but he was doomed to extend his patience still another fortnight, during which he continued to do the duty of the church with the greatest regularity. About a month after he had written to the Earl, Cæsar one morning brought him in two letters, the superscription of one of which being in Sensitive's hand, he opened that first, and read as follows:

"My dear Friend,

"I have watched Lord Aynsford's door for this "fortnight past, as a cat does a mouse, and I at "length can inform you that he is arrived. He "came this morning; but I have endeavoured in "vain to see him: I trust, however, that he writes "to you by this post. I am anxious to hear of your "preferment, and beg you will not delay a moment "writing to me when you receive the Earl's letter. "How are you all? Tell Emily that she has not "broke Col. Spicer's heart: I have seen him twice "this week; the first time in extasies at the opera, "coquetting with a woman of fashion; and the last, "laughing loud in a pastry-cook's shop in St. "James's-street, at the sight of a feeble, old woman "in pursuit of her jack-ass. How could Emily re-"fuse such a colonel? Tell my apt pupil that I "think of her constantly, and hope to give her some "new lessons ere the month of May be over. Ar-"thur will be sorry to hear that his friend Sir Kit "Keeping's nose is grown red; the Baronet is as "fashionable as ever notwithstanding. Adieu! "Remember me affectionately to Mrs. Aubrey; "and tell Arthur-William that I have bought some "very nice studies for him.

"Yours sincerely,

"CHARLES SENSITIVE."

Fond as they all were of Sensitive, they were eager to get through his letter the moment they heard that Lord Aynsford was arrived; for they concluded on the probability of the other letter being from the Earl; and Mrs. Aubrey, at the passage in Sensitive's, mentioning his being come, cried, "Read the other letter first:" but Aubrey had the patience to finish Sensitive's: then looking at the superscription of the other, observed that it was not from Lord Aynsford, for it was not franked. He broke the seal: it was from the Rev. Dr. Bowes, whom Aubrey had often met at Lord Aynsford's. It was short; he glanced it through, turned pale, closed it, and would have put it into his pocket, had not Mrs. Aubrey caught his hand. "What is the "matter?" cried she; "this sudden paleness, this "attempt to put up the letter; what do they tell "me?"—"Oh, my Emily!" exclaimed Aubrey; "oh, my children!" He could say no more. Mrs. Aubrey read the letter to herself, threw it on the table, and was silent; it was the silence of wild amazement. Arthur took up the letter, and cast his eye over it, Emily and Arthurina looking on: "Good God!" exclaimed Arthur, his brow knit, his hair standing an end, while the blood forsook the cheeks of his sisters, and left them as pale as Aubrey; who had now thrown his right hand across his breast, and raised his left hand to his forehead. "Now, what ails you all?" cried Arthur-William, drawing the letter to him from the place where his brother had thrown it, and which he read aloud, with less dismay than the silent glancing it over had spread through the rest of the family. It was briefly this:

"Sir,

"Being presented by the Earl of Aynsford to the

" rectory of Mariton, I shall immediately apply to " the bishop of * * for institution, and proceed " without delay to the parish for the purpose of in- " duction. There will be no occasion for you to " put yourself to the least inconvenience, as I can " lodge at an inn while my presence may be neces- " sary at Mariton; and, as I mean to reside at my " prior benefice, I shall make no objection, if you " wish it, to your continuance in the church as my " curate. I am, Sir,

" Your humble servant,

" RICH. BOWES."

Thus, at one blow, were all the hopes of the Aubreys crushed: the payment of debts, the enabling of Arthur to pursue the profession he had chosen, the accumulating of portions for his sisters, a comfortable existence—all gone! vanished from their view; and, instead, appeared embarrassment, poverty, and mortification. The Aubreys were at first too much confounded to give utterance to their consternation. Aubrey again took up Dr. Bowes's letter: after looking at it for some minutes, he repeated from it—" presented by the Earl of Aynsford!" Arthur, who was now slowly pacing up and down the room, cried " Villain!" Mrs. Aubrey sat stupified: Emily and Arthurina anxiously watched their father's countenance; Arthur-William saw distress painted in it, and was silent. At length Aubrey exclaimed: " I am too certainly awake; " my dream of happiness is for ever fled; I am " roused to be sensible of ruin."—" I can hardly " believe my senses," said Mrs. Aubrey; " how can " it be? There is some mistake; Lord Aynsford " can never be so consummate a villain. Write, " my dear Aubrey, immediately, and inquire into " it."—" Dear Emily," replied Aubrey, " have I

" not already written? Was not I the first who in-
" formed Lord Aynsford of the death of Dr. Searle?"
—" Did the Earl promise you positively?" said Mrs.
Aubrey.—" Positively," replied Aubrey, " if a vo-
" luntary offer on his part, and a grateful accept-
" ance on mine, is positive. Nay more, you may
" remember that I told you at the time, he urged
" me to look forward to a bishopric."—" What do
" you mean to do?" said Mrs. Aubrey; " will you
" not expose his baseness?"—" Alas! my dear
" Emily," replied he, " of what avail will it be? A
" question which is answered in one line of Sensi-
" tive's letter, where he tells us, that Sir Kit Keep-
" ing is as fashionable as ever. Was not his base-
" ness publicly exposed? No, my love! revenge is
" not in our power; and, if it were, we would be
" superior to it. Though Lord Aynsford is base, I
" am not without blame: he has been false, I have
" been foolish; for is it not extreme folly to live on
" expectation? Had I been commonly prudent,
" had I taught you to contemplate the possibility of
" a disappointment, and to live accordingly, we
" should none of us have felt this blow so severely.
" They who cannot learn wisdom from the mild dic-
" tates of Reason, must submit to have it forced
" upon them by the rough hand of Experience. I,
" my dear Emily, I alone am now to blame, and it
" is the will of Providence that we should suffer for
" it; yes, that you, my love, and you, my dear chil-
" dren, should suffer for it: for, however inconsist-
" ent with the goodness of God the conclusion of the
" second commandment has been thought, it is in
" fact nothing more than a simple declaration of the
" nature of things. Children are naturally involved
" in the errors, I will not shock you by saying sins
" on this occasion, of their parents; and what won-
" der is it that the visitation should descend to the

"third and fourth generation? But let us take "courage; for we know that we love our Chastiser, "and we may hope, when he has purified us a little "more, that he will show his mercy to us."—"I "cannot see how you are to blame," said Mrs. Aubrey, "for relying on the faith of a man who pro-"fessed such friendship for you, and I am sure no "man on earth was ever actuated by purer motives "and intentions than you ever were; I cannot, "therefore, bear to hear you censure yourself in "this manner. If there be any blame, it is ours "more than yours, influenced as you ever are by "your affection for us." The tears which had risen gently to the eyes of Emily and Arthurina, ran down their cheeks, when their mother spoke in this manner. "Indeed, indeed, papa," cried Emily, "you "are not to blame: pray, do not blame yourself; "pray let us be happy in spite of every thing; the "poorer we are the more we shall love one another." —"My dear girl," said Aubrey, "love is a grand "resource; and, while we continue united, we can "never be very unhappy. It is fruitless to com-"plain; we must yield to the will of Providence; "and all that we have now to do is to live as the fa-"mily of the curate of Mariton, and no longer like "that of the rector. Come, Emily, my love," continued he, addressing Mrs. Aubrey, "recover your-"self; let us submit to this calamity with becom-"ing resignation; and let us immediately set about "those reforms and retrenchments that will enable "us to live within the stipend of the curacy. The "situation will be novel to us; but let us remember "that there are many clergymen serving curacies "for a less income; and let us endeavour to find "out the secret by which they contrive to live with "large families, and support the dignity of a gentle-"man."—"It will, I fear, be difficult to discover,"

replied Mrs. Aubrey; "and here more difficult than "any where else."—"You will have to brunt the "sneers and brutality of the Spicers and some others," said Aubrey; "but, as Cowper told us, before he "knew of Lord Aynsford's promise, we shall still "have a good house over our heads, a garden that "will yield us vegetables and fruit, and some money, "to buy bread, clothes, and firing; and, I may add, "we shall be saved the expence of a removal: then "surely we have sufficient strength of mind, and a "sufficient stock of love amongst us, to turn aside "the shafts of malice, and to render us indifferent "to the contumely of pride. Come Emily, come "my children, let us rally our powers. It is no "wonder that this unexpected blow should have "thrown us into confusion; but we will not yield to "it; we will imitate some of the great examples "we have admired in our books, and be the wor-"thier of esteem for adversity." Mrs. Aubrey looked at him with new delight, and in silence gave him her hand, as the tear of mingling pity and admiration dropped upon her cheek. Arthur, who was near her, kissed it off, and vowed to devote his life to the happiness of the family. "You must send "me abroad, Sir," said he to his father, "in quest "of fortune; others as poor as myself have suc-"ceeded, and why not I? The Indies, East or "West, hold up hope to adventurers, and who "knows but I may find the road much shorter to "prosperity than that I had chosen."—"We will "think how we may act for the best, my dear boy," replied his father, pressing his hand; "and he that "sees our hearts will remove our difficulties, or aid "us to support them."

Thus, consoled by family affections and the purity of their intentions, the Aubreys resolved to be the first to report the disappointment of their hopes,

that it might be known before the arrival of Dr. Bowes: and, while Aubrey staid at home to write to him and to Sensitive, Mrs. Aubrey and the girls called on some of their friends to announce the change that had taken place. Arthur intended at first to accompany his mother and sisters; but, while they were putting on their things, his thoughts strayed to Eden-bower, and he remained at home to write to Edmund. As confidence and candour were no less prized at Eden-bower than at the Parsonage, Arthur having determined not to communicate his admiration of Miss Smyth to her uncle, never mentioned her in his correspondence with Edmund more particularly than the rest of the family; and, as matters were arranged with Aubrey, he thought it best to confine all information respecting Emily to barely saying, "My sisters and I talk "of you with the greatest interest and regard." In his present letter, after relating the disappointment and situation of his family, he added, that he esteemed himself fortunate in one respect, but that it was a subject of a delicate nature, and he should not enter upon it. He knew that his friend would readily guess that it was a comfort to him not to have involved Harriet in an engagement or affection which now could only have been replete with misery; and he abstained from being more particular, that Edmund might not be under the necessity of drawing his passion from the oblivion to which it was now consigned.

Aubrey, in his letter to Dr. Bowes, congratulated him on his preferment, without deigning to mention Lord Aynsford, and invited him to take up his abode at the Parsonage, which would not be attended with the slightest inconvenience: he also declared his wish of remaining in the curacy. To Sensitive he wrote at large, and poured out the feelings of hi

heart. Mrs. Aubrey and the girls returned home in considerable spirits, having been cheered by the smiles of their friends and the encouraging remarks usually made on such occasions; and a kind of calm ensued at the Parsonage, which was at first rather the lull of suspended sensibility than the tranquil enjoyment of repose. In a few days Sensitive arrived at Mariton, and, at the end of the week, was followed by Dr. Bowes, who accepted Aubrey's invitation, and stayed at the rectory while it was necessary for him to be in the parish. Being formally inducted, he read the articles in the church on Sunday, and preached; and on Monday and Tuesday he received visits from his parishioners, many of whom Aubrey invited to dine with him.

The doctor had little condescension in his manners; he received civilities as if he conferred obligation in admitting them. The haughtiness of his mind was fully denoted in the height, corpulency, and erectness of his person, as well as by the consequential air of his countenance. He seldom smiled or spoke in the morning; but a good dinner excited good humour, and he condescended to praise Aubrey's wine. The parishioners were not at all prepossessed in his favour, and were not much grieved to receive the apology he deigned to make for not residing among them. Aubrey scrupled not to complain to him of the unfair conduct of his patron, whom he represented as having disappointed him most grossly, after suffering him to live two years in hopes of the presentation. "I'll tell you how that "is," said the doctor; "you mistook each other: "my Lord talked to me about it, and showed me "your letter: the whole matter is, you mistook "each other."—"I could never mistake the posi- "tive offer he made me of the benefice."—"That "was before he was aware of your uncle's will."—

"Then he should have told me if the knowledge of "it caused an alteration of his purpose."—"Why, "that was implied in what he had previously said." —"Implied! how?"—"Did not he say that it was "with a view of adding strength and weight to his "connexions?"—"I remember he did."—"Well, "then! when the case was so clearly altered, was "not the offer involved in its fate?"—"I wish he "had been explicit."—"That would have been in- "delicate, and Lord Aynsford is incapable of inde- "licacy. I assure you, Mr. Aubrey, he expresses "a great regard for you; and he told me to find an "opportunity of explaining this matter to you. "You see it was a mistake."—"Yes, Sir, a melan- "choly one to me." Aubrey pursued the subject no farther; and, on Wednesday morning, Dr. Bowes set out on his return to town, leaving him still in possession of the curacy of Mariton.

CHAPTER XLV.

Sensibility—Alteration at the parsonage—Extraordinary apparition at Leicester—Mr. Cowper's adventure at Okeham—Arrival at Mariton—Resolution respecting Smyth—The ghosts of the castle.

Sensitive remained at the Parsonage to partake the regret of his friends, and to afford them all the consolation in his power. No sooner had he received Aubrey's letter, than he posted to the Earl of Aynsford's to inquire into the cause of his disappointment; but, finding it impossible to gain admittance, he returned home, ordered his servant to pack up a portmanteau for him, and set out that very day for Leicestershire. Aubrey himself scarce felt the ca-

lamity so much as Sensitive, who execrated the perfidious Earl, and would have laid his whole fortune at the feet of his friend, had there been a probability of his accepting it; but, fearful of hurting Aubrey, he confined himself to hints of having money in his banker's hands, and much more than he knew what to do with, resolving, on the slightest encouragement, to offer him whatever sum he might want. He was vexed at finding nothing from Aubrey tending to his design. As Aubrey now dealt on credit, he was in no want of money: there was still wine in his cellar, and his supplies were delivered as usual. No alteration at first appeared at the Parsonage, except one; but that was a very important one, the exclusion of company at set dinners: tea and evening parties were all they indulged in, and these more for the sake of hospitality than for the gratification they afforded; for they could find all that was necessary to happiness in their own circle, and with the few who, like Sensitive, was, when among them, considered as one of it. Of these Cowper and his family stood foremost; for, though the ladies had not yet met, Cowper, Edmund, and Arthur had completely endeared them to the Aubreys.

Mr. Cowper had several times intended to carry his sister and niece over to Mariton; but his avocations, and perhaps his reluctance to incurring the expences of a long journey, had hitherto prevented it: he was now, however, determined by the disappointment the Aubreys had met with, to delay his intention no longer. Leaving Edmund at Edenbower to superintend his affairs, he set out in the beginning of May with Mrs. Smyth and Harriet. Mrs. Smyth had long relinquished every idea of ever seeing her husband again, had completely placed all her happiness on her children and on her friendship with her brother, and had resumed the natural gaiety of

her disposition from the time she went to Edenbower. This had received a severe shock from the loss of her niece, whom she loved as her own daughter: but she had again recovered it in a great degree; and, if she were not always lively, she was seldom otherwise than cheerful. At Leicester an extraordinary occurrence took place, that again shook her spirits. Mr. Cowper had some business to transact with Mrs. Searle; Harriet had gone to take a walk with Amelia; and Mrs. Smyth was left by herself writing a letter in a front parlour of the inn. From the inn-yard a post-chaise drew to the door, as if to take up some person. Presently the parlour-door opened, and in walked a man, whom Mrs. Smyth, in spite of the difference of dress, and the alteration of countenance produced by years, immediately recognized to be her husband. The sudden apparition was too much for her to bear; she exclaimed, "Merciful God!" and dropped down upon the floor, bereft of sense. When she came to herself, she found Harriet and Amelia applying salts to her nose, and endeavouring to revive her. She cast her eyes round the room, and, not seeing Smyth, cried, "Where is he?"—"Who? my dear mam-"ma," said Harriet, the tears running down her cheeks.—"Did you see him?" cried Mrs. Smyth. —"See whom?" replied Harriet.—"Your father." —"My father! what can you mean, my dear mam-"ma? pray, be composed."—"Where is your un-"cle?" cried Mrs. Smyth eagerly; "ring the bell, "send for him this instant; call the waiter." Amelia, terrified, rang the bell. "No," said Mrs. Smyth, "run you, make haste, and bring him; "bring my brother to me immediately."—"Do you "stay with your mother, my love," said Amelia to Harriet, "and I will go for your uncle." Harriet thanked her, and she went away as fast as she could

walk. The waiter meeting Miss Searle at the door, as he was going to answer the bell, was desired by her to carry in a glass of water; which he hastened for, and brought to Mrs. Smyth; who, coming more to herself after dispatching Miss Searle for her brother, drank the water, and suffered the man to assist her daughter in raising her into a chair. As she gained strength, she began to suspect that the apparition of her husband was merely an illusion of the brain; but from this apprehension she was soon relieved by questioning the landlady, who returned with the waiter, and who informed her that Mr. Smyth dined in the house, and had been gone about half an hour, in the last chaise that drove up to the door on the other side of the gateway. She asked if he had come into her parlour before he went. The landlady said she did not know, but that it was not unlikely; for it was a very common mistake to go into one room of an inn instead of another. She then examined her as to his figure, which corresponded nearly with the description she gave of it. From these circumstances she was perfectly convinced that she had seen her husband; but, alas! she was no less convinced that he was resolved not to acknowledge her.

Amelia soon returned, bringing both Mr. Cowper and Mrs. Searle. On the way she had explained to them, that, having been walking with Harriet about an hour, she returned with her to the inn, either to prevail on Mrs. Smyth to accompany them, the evening being delightful, or to stay with her; that, going into the parlour, they found her on the floor senseless; on which they had called in the landlady, who assisted for some time to bring her to herself, and had only left them a few minutes, to look for stronger salts, when she revived; and that, on reviving, she spoke of having seen her husband.

When they arrived, Mrs. Smyth was perfectly restored to her recollection; and her relation being corroborated by the declaration of the landlady, Mr. Cowper was satisfied that the figure she had seen was no phantom. The mistress of the inn was again summoned, and questioned by Cowper respecting Mr. Smyth. She said that she knew him very well, from his dining several times in the year at the house with gentlemen of the county, and occasionally taking a bed there; that he was a man of fortune, having a very fine estate near Peterborough; but she had never heard of his being married, or of his having been abroad. Mr. Cowper then inquired with whom he had dined; and she mentioned several gentlemen, with one of whom he had a slight acquaintance. Resolved to lose no time in pursuing Smyth, Mr. Cowper left his sister to the care of Mrs. Searle, and called immediately on the gentleman, whose name was Bowater. The information he received from him tended rather to weaken than confirm the idea of the person in question being his sister's husband. "I have known Smyth," said he, "for a dozen years past. He is much such a man "in person as you describe, allowing for the differ- "ence of years and free living. He is a *bon vivant*, "and a humourist. He inherited a good property "in Norfolk when he came of age; and, at the "death of an uncle, came into a pretty little estate "in Northamptonshire, near Peterborough, since "which I have been acquainted with him. I un- "derstand he made a tour on the Continent in the "early part of his life; but I am confident he was "never married. He is a good-natured old bache- "lor, and you would like him much." This was by no means the character of the villain whom Cowper had lost sight of for near twenty years; but, as no other part of the account was inconsistent with the

history of him at Oporto, it was not sufficient to deter Mr. Cowper from persevering in his design of ascertaining the truth with his own eyes, which he communicated to Mr. Bowater, at the same time begging his assistance in proceeding with propriety. "If you are determined upon it," said Mr. Bowater, "I'll give you a letter of introduction to him; "and you had better set off at once and overtake "him at the next stage, where he means to sleep: "it is not eight o'clock, and he has not been gone "an hour." Mr. Cowper accepted the offer; and, leaving Mr. Bowater to write the letter, went to order a chaise.

While the horses were putting to, he sat with his sister, whom he comforted in the most affectionate manner. The more he reflected on the account he had heard of Smyth, the more he was puzzled; and, though he was too much impressed with the circumstances of his being seen by his wife, and the greatness of his fortune, to relinquish the belief of this being the man; yet he was perplexed with the character Mr. Bowater had given of him. The concealment of his marriage was easily reconciled to the brutal disposition of his brother-in-law; but not so easily to the good nature ascribed to him by his friend: and, even supposing a favourable change had taken place in his disposition, and that, being weaned from his family by length of time and other connexions, he indolently lived on without being disturbed by thoughts of his injustice; yet to meet his wife, refuse to acknowledge her, and leave her senseless on the floor, bespoke no such alteration. There was an obscurity in the subject, and Cowper could not doubt for a moment that it behoved him to clear it up. While this occupied his mind, Mr. Bowater had written the following letter to Mr. Smyth:—

"Dear Smyth, I beg leave to introduce Mr. Cowper to

" you, a gentleman who claims the honour of being
" your brother-in-law. So, you are a very pretty
" fellow, Mr. Smyth, to be caught by the fine eyes
" of Harriet Cowper at Oporto, to marry her, and
" then leave her with two children twenty years
" ago. The fact is, my dear Smyth, that Cowper
" and his sister have been very ill used by a person
" of your name, who inthralled him in an intrigue
" with a Portuguese beauty named Seraphina de
" Monocella, and, marrying his sister, deserted her
" and his children about eighteen months after the
" marriage. They have never been able to discover
" him since, till this very day, when he was detect-
" ed in your person, by your happening to go into
" the parlour where Mrs. Smyth was. Believing all
" this to be a mistake, I have told Cowper who you
" are, and, as he is bent on satisfying his own eyes,
" I have given him this letter to you at his request.
" He is a worthy creature; and you will have the
" pleasure of making him laugh over this at a good
" supper.

" Yours sincerely,

" THO. BOWATER."

This letter was written and sealed before the return of Mr. Cowper, who, impatient to be gone, stopped only to receive it, and then ordered the boy to drive on to Okeham. On the way he revolved the circumstances in his mind, and, before he reached the town, had worked himself into a certainty that he was about to meet the dire enemy of his life. He examined his heart, and found it purified from every sentiment of revenge: in his pursuit he was actuated solely by the desire of doing justice to his sister and her children. If Smyth were still as base as when he resided at Oporto, his patrimonial property might prove to be settled; and, whether it was or not, he might

be compelled to allow his wife a support adequate to his situation in life: but, at all events, Mr. Cowper determined to act coolly, and rather to soothe than to irritate him. The road being very hilly, it was past ten o'clock before he arrived at Okeham, where the first thing he did was to inquire for Mr. Smyth; and was told that he was just gone up to his bed-room. Anxious to see him, and resolved not to sleep before his mind was at rest, he desired the landlord to carry up Mr. Bowater's letter, and to tell him that the gentleman who brought it begged earnestly to see him before he went to bed.

Having shown Mr. Cowper into a room, the landlord went to execute his commission. He was gone some time, during which Cowper's patience was not a little tried. At length he returned, and said, that the gentleman was unwell, and could see nobody that night. "I am sure," said Cowper, "that "he would see me, let him be ever so ill, if he knew "of what importance it was."—"Why, truly, Sir," replied Boniface, "it must be something of import-"ance; for I never saw a man turn wild so all of a "sudden as Mr. Smyth when he read the letter; he "jumped from one side of the room to the other, "calling Cowper, Cowper, over and over again. I "verily believe he is mad."—"Show me to his "door;" cried Cowper, more and more convinced of the identity of Smyth; "I have but to say a word "to him, and I am clear he will admit me: show "me the way."—"By all means, Sir," replied the landlord; who, taking up a candle, lighted Mr. Cowper up stairs to Mr. Smyth's door. He tried the lock without ceremony, and, finding the door open to his touch, walked into the chamber, where he saw Mr. Smyth in his shirt, standing at the glass, blacking his eye-brows and the lines of his face with a burnt cork. No sooner, however, was

Mr. Cowper in the chamber, than he threw down the cork, and jumping into bed, pulled the clothes over his face. "This is too much, Sir," cried Cowper; "but I want no further proof. Landlord, "leave the room; I have something to say to this "gentleman in private."—"Oh, no!" said Mr. Smyth, in a rough feigned voice, "oh, no! he will "murder me!"—"I never saw a gentleman so "frightened in all my life," said the landlord to Mr. Cowper, "you had better leave him till to-"morrow, Sir." Mr. Cowper began to believe that the sudden sight of his sister, and the equally sudden intelligence of his being at the inn, together with his coming into the chamber without his permission, had really had an effect upon Smyth's brain; he therefore spoke to him in the gentlest and kindest manner: "Come, Mr. Smyth," said he, "let not this affect you too much: we are now both "older, and are, I hope, wiser and better men "than we were twenty years ago." Smyth groaned; and, peeping over the bed-clothes, cried out, in the same rough voice: "Go, go." There was but little light in the room; yet Cowper thought he perceived, beneath the cork marks, the features of the villain who had ruined him, and he shuddered at the recollection. He saw the face, however, but for a moment, for Smyth calling out, "Cowper! Har-"riet! Seraphina!" again plunged beneath the clothes. These exclamations satisfied Mr. Cowper that he had at last found the husband of his sister; and, fearing that his continuing by him might complete the derangement of a guilty conscience, he withdrew, desiring the landlord to attend to him, and saying that he would wait to converse with him in the morning, when he hoped to find him composed.

Having eat a light supper, Mr. Cowper sat with a

little wine and water before him, ruminating on the difference in the characters of men, and on the event that had just taken place, when the landlord came into the room, and said, that Mr. Blount the surgeon would be glad to speak to him. "I know no "such person," said Mr. Cowper; "what can he "want with me?"—"Sir," answered the landlord, "seeing Mr. Smyth was so bad, I fetched him of "my own accord."—"Oh! by all means," said Mr. Cowper, "let him come in." The door was opened, and in came the doctor. He was a tall man, with a quick eye, and a projecting under lip, which having the correspondent muscles of the upper-lip drawn towards the cheeks, seemed to mark his countenance with a settled, significant smile. It was one of those countenances that constantly incline a spectator to laugh, and is the best auxiliary a wag can have.—"The gentleman, Sir, will do very well," said the facetious doctor, "very well indeed. I "have bled him copiously, clapped a blister on the "occiput, and ordered him a gentle cathartic: he "will do very well, very well indeed. I find he has "been abroad, Sir; talks Portuguese like the very "mouth of the Tagus. His ideas run upon a Don-"na Seraphina, and he talks of a Harriet Cowper. I "take it, Sir, he must have had some fatal love af-"fair with that Donna that dwells upon his mind." —"Pray, Sir," said Mr. Cowper, "did you know "Mr. Smyth before?"—"Smyth, of Walsham, in "Norfolk! of Widrington Park, in Northampton-"shire! know him?" cried the doctor; "odd's "fish, Sir, does a beggar know his dish? I have "known him ever since I was a boy: he is about "my own age. He has a kinck, Sir: this is not the "first time I have found phlebotomy and Spanish "flies proper for his temperament."—"Allow me," said Mr. Cowper, "to ask you, as you have known

" him so long, whether you remember his living " some time in Portugal, and whether you ever " heard of his being married."—" He was in Por- " tugal a long while," replied Dr. Blount, " but " never married; yet one would imagine from his " harping upon marriage as he did to-night, that he " had been inthralled in some untoward match of " that sort: ' Doctor,' said he to me, as he was go- " ing to swallow the cathartic, ' I'll give you Ro- " chester's toast on a certain marriage:

" Here's to Kate,
" Our Sovereign's mate,
" Of the royal house of Lisbon;
" But the Devil take Hyde,
" And the Bishop beside,
" That made her bone his bone.'

" I take it, Sir, he committed some prank with that " Donna Seraphina, which, some way or other, pre- " vented his ever thinking of marrying in England; " and that's a pity, for his wealth, Sir, is immense, " immense."—" Do you think, doctor," said Mr. Cowper, " that the wandering of his intellect will " be of short duration?"—" Over already, Sir," re- plied the facetious surgeon, " or he could not have " repeated the poetical toast: over already, but he " must not be disturbed any more-to-night; he will " be as well in the morning as ever he was in " his life."—" I hope it will be so," said Mr. Cow- per; " for I have business of importance with him." —" By all means," cried the doctor; " only let him " have his rest out. You look pale, good Sir," continued he, seizing Mr. Cowper's wrist, and feel- ing his pulse: " no; only a little sinking from agi- " tation and fatigue." He then took up a wine- glass, and pouring some wine and water into it from Mr. Cowper's goblet, drew a phial from his breeches-

pocket, and put about a tea-spoonful of its contents into the glass, saying: "this will set all to rights; "it is a capital cordial; I always carry it about me. "It will comfort and refresh you beyond every "thing." Mr. Cowper smiled, and swallowed it without making the least objection. The doctor then advising him to go to bed soon, wished him a good night, and withdrew. His laughable countenance left a strong impression on Mr. Cowper, who, as soon as he was gone, gave way to the ludicrous effect of it, and laughed heartily. He soon after felt himself drowsy, and went to bed, giving an order to be called very early.

When he woke next day, he observed his window-curtains drawn up, and the sun shining into the room full from the south: he looked at his watch, and it corroborated, with mechanical precision, the evidence of the sun; it was near one o'clock: he had slept almost fourteen hours. He rang the bell violently; and a waiter coming in, he asked why he had not been called as he desired. The waiter assured him that the chamber-maid had called him at seven o'clock, and that he himself had come into the room at nine, and drawn up his curtains. Mr. Cowper now perceived that he had simply suffered himself to be the object of a trick, which he did not doubt was concerted between Smyth and his doctor. He no longer gave faith to his feigned derangement, or to the surgeon's operations; he was certain that Smyth first meant to disguise himself, but that having foolishly betrayed his person by the mention of Seraphina and his sister in his pretended madness, had determined to part without any explanation.—He dressed himself, and, going to his room below, sent for the landlord, whom he asked for Mr. Smyth; and was informed, that he and Mr. Blount went away together at eight o'clock in the morning,

but that he had left his compliments and a letter for Mr. Cowper to carry to Leicester. The letter was directed to Mr. Bowater. Mr. Cowper had too great a command of himself, and possessed too much good sense to expose the affair farther at the inn: he was thoroughly satisfied both of the person and unaltered baseness of Smyth, and, knowing now who he was, and where to find him, he thought it needless to pursue him farther at present; he therefore took some refreshment, ordered his chaise, and returned to Leicester.

He sent a porter with the letter to Mr. Bowater; while he staid and related his adventure to his sister, whom he consoled as well as he could, and assured that he would now see justice done to her. He had hardly finished his story, when he received the following note from Mr. Bowater, inclosing Smyth's letter to him:—"Dear Sir, I think it necessary to "send you the inclosed, that you may be convinced "how entirely you are mistaken in Mr. Smyth; and "I hope it will not be long before I have the plea-"sure of seeing you together at my house. I am," &c.—"It is not the villain's hand," said Cowper, looking at the letter from Smyth, which was as follows:

"Dear Bowater,

"When your friend Mr. Cowper sent me your "letter last night I was gone up to bed, and in one "of those unaccountable fits you have sometimes "seen me overtaken with. I would have postponed "meeting him till the morning; but he broke "abruptly into my chamber. He was polite enough, "however, to leave me, on finding what an uncom-"fortable state I was in. Perhaps he was satisfied that "I am not the person he supposed; though I think "he could hardly have seen enough of me to distin-

" guish properly. I waited a considerable time this " morning in hopes of seeing him; but finding that " he preferred his bed, I concluded he was con- " vinced, and I set out from Okeham, it being ne- " cessary that I should get to Peterborough early. " I assure you that I do not know Mr. Cowper, and " I never was at Oporto, though I have been at " Lisbon. If he should have any doubt remaining " on his mind, it will be easily removed next time I " come to Leicester, where I shall have great plea- " sure in laughing the matter over with him at your " table. At present I am going from Widrington " Park immediately into Norfolk, thence to London, " and Heaven knows where. I am too unwell this " morning to use the pen myself."—[" *Oh! you* " *are!" exclaimed Mr. Cowper;* " *I thought it* " *would be so.*"]—" I am too unwell this morning to " use the pen myself; and the doctor who is with " me kindly writes what I dictate. I'll trouble you " with my compliments to Mr. Cowper.

" Yours sincerely,

" E. S."

" Compliments to Mr. Cowper!" exclaimed Cow- per; " what a soul must this man have! not satisfied " with his villany, he adds insult to injury." It was clear to him that Mr. Smyth was resolved to avoid him, and that it would at present be very difficult, or rather impossible, to force him to an interview; he therefore contented himself with sending the let- ter back to Mr. Bowater, in a note, in which he merely said that he was satisfied. Having conclud- ed the business he had with Mrs. Searle, he, his sis- ter, and niece, took leave of her and of Amelia, and proceeded to Mariton. On the road they talked of the extraordinary event that had happened; and Mr. Cowper lamented that he was not in the parlour

at the time Smyth came in. Mrs. Smyth bore her lot with patience, nor ever formed a wish for a reunion with him: but Harriet, poor Harriet, frequently sighed, and said, with tears in her eyes, that it was a hard fate to be deserted by a father. "You "have never known the want of one, Harriet," said Mrs. Smyth.——"No, indeed," replied Harriet, leaning on her uncle's neck, "I never have: my "uncle has been the kindest of fathers to me; yet, "to be forsaken by the author of my life! O! un- "cle! is it not a very, *very* painful thought?"—"It "is, it is, my dear Harriet," replied Mr. Cowper; "but it is a less evil than being under the dominion "of a bad man." He then turned the conversation on their friends at the Parsonage at Mariton, renewed his counsels to her respecting the passions in general, and particularly cautioned her to keep a guard on her heart against that which led to marriage. He was still speaking to her on the subject when the chaise stopped at the Parsonage door, and Arthur flew up to it to hand them out. Never was joy more sincere than that which spread through the house on the meeting of the families; it was the meeting of affectionate brothers and sisters. Some little regret obtruded itself generally for the necessity of Edmund's absence; and it was greatest perhaps in the bosoms of Arthur and Emily, but it was not visible: nor did Mr. Cowper suffer that which he felt for Aubrey's disappointment to be perceived. Though he had seldom been in company with Sensitive, he was not unknown to him; he was glad to see him at Mariton, and cordially shook hands with him: he treated him as one of the family, and freely related before him the conduct of Smyth, and the whole adventure that had lately occurred with him. The circumstance created great surprise; and Aubrey at first was for pursuing him immediately from

place to place, and hunting him down like a wild beast: but he was convinced by Mr. Cowper that it would be time lost, as the process of the ecclesiastical court would more easily effect all that could be obtained; and, as he should also apply to the courts of common law for near twenty years' maintenance, the villain might, in the mean time, unpursued by him, run from pillar to post to avoid him.

When more interesting communications permitted, Aubrey informed Mr. Cowper of the tricks that were played at the castle to frighten the country people. The actors in the farce had desisted from exhibiting them during the winter; but they had re-appeared a few days before Mr. Cowper's arrival. There was no likelihood of their being detected in the fact, as they only made their appearance at long intervals, when all expectation of them had subsided: their manœuvres were short, and they were gone before any body could reach the castle. This information led Mr. Cowper and Sensitive separately to go several days to examine the castle minutely: neither of them could trace any thing that might lead to a discovery. One evening, when the whole party had been out walking on the opposite side of the country, Sensitive, loitering behind the rest with Arthurina, was attracted by the figure of a well-dressed man on horseback ascending a hill, which they were going down. At first Sensitive doubted his eyes; but was soon convinced that they did not deceive him. It was a man who had been a pensioner of his for several months; a beggar, whom he had first casually relieved, and whose pitiful story having caught his attention, induced him to inquire into the truth of it. Proving partly true was sufficient to interest such a heart as Sensitive's; he recommended him to work for his support, procured him work, and, as he had a family, gave him pe-

riodically some money. For more than a twelvemonth past he had absconded, leaving his wife and children on the parish. "Brookes!" cried Sensitive, looking him full in the face. There is a chord in the frame of man which, unless he be descended to a truly diabolical state, never fails to vibrate to the touch of gratitude; a chord which no power but that of Lucifer himself ever broke. Brookes, electrified at the sight and voice of Sensitive, forgetful of his situation, sprang from his horse, bowed to his benefactor, and said he hoped he saw him well. Sensitive entered into conversation with him, Arthurina having gone on to join the party. Never expecting to meet any one who could know him in that part of the country, he had studied no story; and, when Sensitive questioned him as to his clothes, horse, and appearance altogether, he gave a bungling, contradictory account of himself. This determined Sensitive to secure him. "Mr. Brookes," said he, laying hold of the bridle of his horse, "you and I "must have a little farther talk; return with me; "you may still find me of service to you: but, if "you make any opposition, you will have cause to "repent it."—"You can't charge me with any "crime, Sir," said Brookes, with a countenance that betrayed guilt.—"Brookes," replied Sensitive, sifting him, "I know more than you suppose; both "you and your accomplices are now in my power. "I would rather save you than hang you; but that "must depend upon yourself." Brookes's conscience assisting this stratagem, he exclaimed, with a terrified look: "For God's sake, Sir, have mercy "upon me!"—"If I find," said Sensitive, "that "you make an honest and full confession, no harm "shall come to you, on your determining to forsake "your evil ways, and to return and support your fa-"mily; nay, I will exert myself to put you in a

" good situation ; but if you attempt to deceive me, " which you cannot, I repeat to you, that you will " repent it." Brookes, not doubting that Sensitive was thoroughly acquainted with his iniquitous practices, threw himself entirely on his mercy, and confessed the criminal resource by which he was furnished with the supplies that supported him in a state of comparative affluence. How surprised was Sensitive to find, in this confession, a clue to the history of the castle ghosts! A large subterranean chamber, unknown to the inhabitants of Mariton, had been accidentally discovered by some villains, from a flue which led into the kitchen-chimney. It was considered as a secure place for the purpose of coining money and forging bank-notes. All traces of the flue were destroyed, and a concealed entrance made into the chamber; the necessary implements were conveyed into it in the night-time; and for some years a gang of villains had met there at stated times to carry on their work. Finding that the country people made the castle a common walk, the old device of keeping them away by their superstitious terrors was resorted to ; and nitre, gunpowder, and pasteboard figures, produced at a distance the effect proposed. These fire-works were never played off but once at a time, and that never about the period that the business was going on, being merely intended to keep up the notion of the castle being haunted; and, in order that only a few of the lower class of people might see the apparitions, care was taken to exhibit them when the whole neighbourhood was supposed to be asleep, a few excepted, who were previously excited, by arts made use of, to watch. The report of these kept the story sufficiently alive. The hue and cry that was raised had alarmed them, and it was even proposed to remove; but the difficulty of finding another place, and the

danger of transporting their implements, had determined them to continue at the castle; and persevering in an occasional display of ghosts was held to be a necessary expedient. The leader of the gang was a clever man and a gentleman; he kept the accounts, and sent the money and notes to different agents in different parts of the kingdom, and reckoned very fairly with the associates, who were all getting rich; Brookes for one, who now made no scruple to name his accomplices, the chief of whom was a Mr. Strange, a good-natured merry man, who had admitted him at the request of an acquaintance that had been a good while among them.

Sensitive, leading the horse, and attended by Brookes, followed his friends to the Parsonage; and their surprise at the repetition of this tale, was not less than his own when he first heard it. Brookes, being now ready to comply with all he was desired to do, undertook to discover the entrance to the subterranean chamber; and the gentlemen were about to issue forth, when Mr. Elton was announced; on which Brookes was desired to remain with Cæsar till the story was told to that gentleman, whom Aubrey proposed to take with them. He was greatly surprised on finding Mr. Cowper and Sensitive at the Parsonage; but, as they received him well, and as Arthur seemed, in gratitude for his ridding him so completely of Lady Sudley, to forget the vain boast he had made of kindness to his family, he soon found himself supported by his effrontery and good spirits, till Aubrey began to relate the story of the castle ghosts, when he appeared confounded. As soon as it was concluded, he looked at his watch, without saying a word on the subject, expressed great surprise at his mistaking the hour, regretted he could not accompany the party, and requested that his horse might be brought to the door

immediately. As he passed through the hall, he darted a furious look at Brookes, who was sitting there, sprang into his saddle, and galloped off before the astonished coiner had time to inform the company at the Parsonage, that the gentleman was no other than the agreeable Mr. Strange, the head of the castle gang.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Mr. Cowper gives a reason for leaving Mariton—Hints a change to Aubrey—State of Sensitive's affairs—His determination respecting Arthurina—Progress of misfortune—New retrenchment—Revolution among the maids—Unexpected offer—Conduct of the Cambridges—Duns—Love and Poverty.

EVIDENT as were the vices of Elton, not one of the party at the Parsonage conceived him so sunk as to have become the associate of the lowest of men in so desperate a game; and, had not his manner of departing corroborated the fact, Brookes would have had some difficulty in obtaining belief. It was now but too clear; information was therefore immediately given to a neighbouring magistrate of the whole affair, and transmitted to the public office in London. It was agreed, that the best plan would have been to have kept the matter secret till the next time of the meeting of the culprits; but that was rendered impracticable by the unexpected visit from Elton; and all that could now be attempted was to take up those accomplices whose places of abode were known to Brookes. Even in this they failed; for Elton meeting one of the gang as he left Mariton, intelligence was immediately given to all, and none were apprehended. Sensitive's discovery had one good effect, however; not only were the villains

for ever routed from the castle, but the passage to the subterranean chamber being shown by Brookes, the whole country came to visit it, and the villagers suspected that they were mistaken in the belief of ghosts. The Aubreys were highly gratified with this occurrence; and the company of their friends banished disappointment and regret. Mrs. Aubrey was extremely pleased with Mrs. Smyth. Arthur and Harriet were so strictly upon their guard, that not a single word tending to love escaped their lips; but how pleased they were with each other was not to be concealed from experienced eyes; and Mr. Cowper, being before aware of the danger, resolved not to prolong a visit, which he deemed necessary to make, but which it was as necessary to shorten; he therefore candidly told Aubrey the reason of his resolution, and Aubrey as candidly told him his own fears; and it was agreed that, amiable as they were, a marriage between them, or even the encouragement of the thought, would be the height of imprudence.

Mr. Cowper, notwithstanding, extended his stay to a fortnight, during which he had frequent conversations with Aubrey on his situation, on economy, and on the benefit that might be derived from the cultivation of land; an employment neither inconsistent with his pastoral duties, nor unworthy his sacred profession. In the course of these conversations he more than once, however, said to Aubrey: "My good friend, I see that this curacy, though "one of the best in England, will ruin you; you "will do better in changing for a poorer one: you "ought to keep the change in view. The manner "of living here and your feelings are in a conspira- "cy against your peace." Aubrey felt the justness of the remark, and wished that he had the curacy of Melford. "I wish you had," said Mr. Cowper;

" and I do not see any thing improbable in it: the " present Mr. Grey is advanced in years, and ought " to have an assistant; I will sound him upon it: " but I foresee a difficulty about a house; for he is " too much attached to his parish ever to relinquish " the duty of it while he is able to ascend his pulpit. " I would build a cottage for you myself, but that I " have been borrowing large sums of money for " these two years past, and advancing my own " funds, with a view of saving Charles Sensitive, " who has a heart worthy of every good man's care. " I gave you a hint of what I was about when I was " in town, where I have again lately been, unknown to " him, on business relative to his affairs, which kept " me from meeting you at Leicester when Dr. Searle died." Aubrey here expressed the greatest affection and esteem for Sensitive, and confided in Mr. Cowper the proposals he had made respecting Arthurina. " I observe his attachment," said Mr. Cowper, " and it is another proof of his disinterested sensi- " bility. He believes himself worth upwards of " twenty thousand pounds, and he now knows that " your daughters have no prospect of a portion; " such an affection deserves to be rewarded; but " you must judge for yourself. If he save five " thousand pounds out of his fortune, it will be the " utmost; and what is the interest of that sum for " persons brought up as he and Arthurina have " been? In the course of eighteen months or two " years after he came of age, Sensitive entered into " four securities for different men, with whom he " was in habits of friendship, if I may say so, but " who were ruined at the time, and only held up " their heads on the money his credit enabled them " to borrow. The largest of these is for seven thou- " sand pounds, two are for five, and one for three, " making together twenty; almost, if not altoge-

" ther, as much as his estate is worth. These secu-
" rities I have managed, by stating the case to my
" friends, to take up; and that for seven thousand
" became due last week. I know that the principal
" has fled; and I am every moment in expectation
" of receiving a letter here from my agent, inform-
" ing me of non-payment. I shall then open the
" business to Sensitive, and show him what I have
" done. The other securities fall due in the course
" of the summer, and are all in the same predica-
" ment; they will certainly all come against him."
—" I do not see," said Aubrey, " that he can save
" a shilling."—" Yes," replied Cowper, " I have
" contrived to save him five thousand pounds in this
" manner: I heard of these transactions soon after
" they took place, and, at the same time, that they
" were usurious contracts; of which I took advan-
" tage. I was well known to the person who lent
" the money; for seven he had only given five, for
" five three, and for three two. Usury is not so odious
" where lenders fairly run great risks; and, in some
" instances, we know that the law considers risks. But,
" where there is no hazard at all, it is infamous: in
" this case there was none. I expatiated so ear-
" nestly on the subject with the lender, and so per-
" suaded him that I would take steps to render the
" contracts void, that I prevailed upon him to as-
" sign them to me for his own money and five hun-
" dred pounds over; so that, instead of twenty
" thousand pounds, Sensitive will have only between
" thirteen and fourteen to pay; and, allowing for his
" having got rid of two or three thousand, I reckon he
" may save about five altogether. This is something,
" and must console him for the loss of his estate;
" for it must be sold to refund the money I borrow-
" ed, as it is the only means I have. After all, I
" am not certain that you should object to his mar-

" riage with your daughter: if Sensitive will make " use of his talents, he may maintain her in com- " fort, and perhaps in affluence." Aubrey lament- ed Sensitive's misfortune, and said, that he should leave it entirely to himself to pay his addresses to Arthurina, or discontinue his attentions, as he judg- ed best.

At the conclusion of this conversation, Mr. Cow- per received the letter he expected, which he showed to Aubrey; and shortly after being joined by Sensi- tive, he entered delicately on the subject, knowing how easily his nerves were wrung. To excuse his speaking to him before Aubrey, he noticed their friendship, and observed that they had just been con- versing about him with the liveliest interest. Poor Sensitive was struck with amazement and horror at the intelligence he received from Mr. Cowper; and so little was he prepared for the blow, that he had not even kept in mind the time at which the debt became due. He thought it impossible that men, whom he had saved by his credit, should be delibe- rately the cause of his ruin. Too well convinced, however, by what he heard, he shuddered as much at thought of the villany that contaminated man- kind as at his own misfortune; but his execration of the wretch who betrayed him was weak in com- parison with his admiration of the virtue that was so active in saving and in serving. After the first emotion of surprise was over, Sensitive, with a warmth that evidenced his sincerity, assured Mr. Cowper that he should ever estimate his loss small when compared to his gain; for money might be accumulated, but such a friend was not to be purchased by the largest fortune. A cordial and unreserved conversation followed, in which, after some hesitation arising from his unfeigned modesty, Sensitive thanked Mr. Cowper for the hint of turn-

ing his attainment in painting to the purposes of fortune. It was an art of which any gentleman might be proud, and the proper study of which tended to enlarge the mind, and to plant in it those sentiments that distinguish a gentleman. To Aubrey he applied for guidance respecting Arthurina: "I regret," said he, "the loss I am doomed to "suffer; I doubly regret it, because my estate was "patrimonial; but my greatest sorrow on the oc- "casion arises from my being deprived of the power "of being useful to you. I am now a poor man; "but if you think there remains enough, aided by "my exertions ——" Here Aubrey interrupted him, saying: "Think and act as you please, my dear "Sensitive: I think you rich enough; and, if you "are of the same opinion, obtain Arthurina's con- "sent, and you shall have mine."—"I believe," replied he, "that I have made some progress in her "affection; but I have never yet spoken to her of "love, nor will I now till my fate is ascertained, till "I know precisely what I can call my own, and till I "have tried the probability of my success with the "public." Mr. Cowper applauded his resolution: "My worthy young friend," said he, "I do not "doubt you will do well; but it is a pity that all "young men coming into the world with such feel- "ings as you are possessed of, are not made ac- "quainted with your fate; for few may have a re- "source like yours. The earlier men are taught to "connect virtue with reason, to associate the head "with the heart, the more efficient and the more "extensive will their benevolence be."—"Oh! my "dear Mr. Cowper," replied Sensitive, "rather "wish that my example may be concealed, lest its "effect be to banish benevolence from the heart of "man."—"With those," said Mr. Cowper, "who "have no seeds of it in the heart, your exam-

" ple might serve as an excuse for the want of it;
" but, with those where it teems, it would, I think,
" only serve to moderate the sensibility of their na-
" ture; and, far from indisposing them to kind ac-
" tions, would but excite an attention necessary to
" preserve them from being disqualified to indulge
" through life in a pleasure so amiable in the sight
" of God and man. A man without benevolence, I
" allow, to be worse than a brute; but a man who
" incautiously stops a source of it, and that one of
" the most considerable, is not innocent, though he
" is more to be pitied." To this proposition Sensitive assented with a sigh, and again declared his resolution to strain every nerve to repair the effects of his folly. The impression left on his mind by the intelligence he had received from Mr. Cowper was not to be concealed; he was sensible too that he damped the spirits of his friends; and he determined to leave them for the present. Assuring Mr. Cowper that he should be ready to co-operate with him respecting the measures for the reimbursement of his friends whenever it became necessary, and telling Aubrey that he was going to prepare his house for the execution of his design, and to see if it were possible to obtain any security for the debts not yet due, he bade his friends farewell, and set out for town. Mr. Cowper staid but two days after him, during which nothing particular occurred, except that, in conversing with Aubrey respecting Arthur, he approved the idea started by the latter himself, of trying his fortune in the West Indies; a step which Aubrey said he would consider, and which, if it were adopted, his friend promised to second with all his influence with a gentleman of large fortune in the West Indies. Mrs. Smyth and Harriet, in taking leave of the Aubreys, shed tears, and warmly regretted the great distance between their

places of residence. The Aubreys, on their part, were equally affectionate; and Arthur, in bidding adieu to Harriet, thought that it was for ever.

The summer advanced, and fashionable people leaving town for the country, Mariton was recruited by some families: among others, the Spicers returned, and the elegances of Spicer-hall attracted all the country. From these festivities the Aubreys were of course excluded; every art was used by the donors to poison the minds of the company against them, and not without success. The nature of Aubrey's loss was better understood than when he first came, and his late disappointment was made the subject of ridicule. He continued resolute in not giving dinners, and he was soon dropped by those who loved good ones, and who thought much of the happiness of life consisted in giving and receiving them. Before the summer was over it was very evident that Spicer-hall afforded more gratification than the Parsonage; and all attentions to the latter precluded intimacy at the former. The Aubreys, taught by experience, understood this perfectly well; they had within themselves a happiness, "which passeth show;" and the aberration of summer friends was not now a misfortune of such magnitude as to disturb it: but it was seriously disturbed by observing that, in spite of all their endeavours, their expences greatly exceeded their income, and that the persons to whom Aubrey was in debt began to show great impatience for payment. They scrutinized their mode of living, to see what could yet be reformed, and could discover nothing that appeared superfluous; yet something must be curtailed, or their expences would never be reduced to their receipts. After much consideration, Mrs. Aubrey thought, as they never had dinner company, that Nanny the cook might also discharge the house-

maid's part; and Mrs. Miller being consulted, thought so too, particularly as she would herself assist in making the beds, and putting the bed-rooms to rights. There was, however, another person to be consulted on the occasion, and that was Nanny, who entirely differed in opinion with her mistress and Mrs. Miller, and could not be convinced of the practicability of such an arrangement; and, as Mrs. Aubrey continued determined upon it, she gave her warning. In a few days, Patty informed her mistress, that, if her sister Nanny went away, she must go too: to which Mrs. Aubrey, angry and hurt on the occasion, assented.

She had hardly done this, when the housemaid desired to speak with her. This unexpected conduct of the servants vexed her extremely; for they had always been treated with the greatest kindness; and that all should now suddenly forsake her, because it was out of her power to retain all, was vile: yet she could not wonder at a want of delicacy in persons of their station, when those who had the advantages of education and fortune had proved themselves so deficient in it. "Well, Betty," said she to the maid, on her entering the room, "you "too are come to give me warning?"—"Warn-"ing, ma'am!" cried Betty.—"I shall less wonder "at it," continued Mrs. Aubrey, "in you than "in Nanny and Patty, because you were the per-"son I thought myself obliged to part with; I say "obliged, Betty, for I should never have proposed "it but from a sense of duty."—"If you please to "turn me away, ma'am, I must go," replied Betty; "but, till you do, I never will leave you. I came, "ma'am, to tell you, if you please, since Nanny "and Patty have both given you warning, that I "think I can manage myself to do all the work "without having any body else."—"My good

" girl," said Mrs. Aubrey, " you have indeed " surprised me, and most delightfully; but can it " be? You are neither accustomed to cooking nor " the care of cows, even supposing the whole work " of the house were not too much for you."—" It " is not too much, ma'am," said Betty; " and in " my last place, before I came to Mr. Dodson, I " lived with a farmer, maid of all works. I could " cook plain victuals very well then, and, by help- " ing Nanny, I have since learned to stew, and to " do up a number of kickshaws: I think, ma'am, if " you would try me, I should do very well: at least " I would use my best endeavours; and as for the " cows, and making a little butter, why, la! ma'am, " what is it?"—" How came you then not to under- " take the dairy at first?"—" Oh, dear! ma'am," said Betty, " there is a great deal of difference. " You was then quite strange to me, and I thought " if I did my work as housemaid for housemaid's " wages it was all that I ought to do: but now, " ma'am, that I know you so well, and love you and " all the family, I would do all work for you with- " out wages, till I could not stand any longer." Such emanations of soul are independent of fortune or station; they are admirable wherever they appear, and go to the heart. Charmed with Betty, Mrs. Aubrey assured her of her attachment, and immediately agreed to make the experiment, saying, at the same time, that she thought it would be necessary to have a girl to help her.

Another proof of soul with which the Aubreys were delighted was given by the Cambridges: in proportion as others became remiss in attention at the Parsonage, they increased their assiduities with unvarying respect. Frequent intercourse endeared them to one another; the friendship that took place helped to mitigate the mortifications which the Au-

breys were doomed to suffer; and, through the summer and autumn, diverted their sensibility from objects too well calculated to wound it. These objects did not consist in the sullen glances of Miss Spicer, or the indifference of the undisturbed consumers of the inventions of luxury; but in the repeated applications and indelicate remarks of persons to whose remonstrances and reproaches they were morally bound to submit. Every creditor is not formed, like Sensitive, to hold his head in sunbeams, and his foot on storms*: Aubrey's heart was seldom gladdened by the appearance either of the face or of the hand-writing of his creditors; dun after dun knocked at his gate, letter after letter demanded payment, when payment was out of his power: he saw those who came, and answered those who wrote, without giving satisfaction. One or two exceptions there were: his taylor, who had served him for many years previous to his misfortunes, never would send in his bill: and Mr. Browne, to whom he was indebted for medicine and attendance during Arthur's illness, and for occasional care of the family, would not hear of an account. Once when Aubrey pressed him on the subject, he said: "Pray "never let this trouble your thoughts; the whole "is erased from my books, and shall be from my "memory." This worthy man spoke the truth; he had erased the entries made in his books, and he banished the subject from his thoughts. Aubrey respected and loved Mr. Browne; but this generosity was productive of as great pain, though of a different nature, as the implacability of his other creditors. Inability to satisfy wrung his heart; a sense

* "The creditor, whose appearance gladdens the heart of a "debtor, may hold his head in sun-beams, and his foot on "storms." LAVATER.

of injustice embittered his reflections, and rendered the very pulpit a terror to him. There, it was his duty to preach against the very vice into which he had fallen; and he felt that it was sullied by the disgrace of the preacher. Conscious, however, that he never meant to be unjust; that, far from wronging any man designedly, he would pour out his blood to serve his fellow-creatures, and that he lived as frugally as possible, his days passed not without some consolatory views of his love of rectitude; and the union, talents, and cheerfulness of his family, combined to relieve the oppressive load of debt, and to comfort and gladden his heart at times, in spite of duns, reproach, and rudeness. The Aubreys completely refuted the adage of "Love flying out "of the window when Poverty came in at the door:" the husband and wife, the parent and child, the master and servant, secured him in his several forms; and Love, too much charmed with his own power to fly from the view of it, ran to the door to embrace the spectre Poverty, and, with the first kiss, smoothed her rugged brow: they agreed, for once in a way, to dwell together; and Poverty promised to smile with Love, if Love would sometimes groan with Poverty.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Determination respecting Arthur—Household affairs—One of the consequences of debt—Self-reproach—Cause of Arthur's voyage being postponed.

Love was soon doomed to the severest pangs. The Aubreys conceived that no misfortune in life could be compared to that of separation; it was rending

nature, it was tearing off the limbs from the body. The necessity of Arthur's leaving his family to become an adventurer in distant regions of the globe, pressed hard upon the hearts of the whole group, and to eat a dry crust and drink water was thought to be comparative happiness. Arthur shared these feelings, but he had other feelings likewise, which awakened in his mind sentiments of a firmer cast. A passive existence was not to be endured in any situation of life, and still less in one that called imperiously for activity: to remain a burden and a clog upon the efforts of a beloved family, who were struggling to preserve justice with the world, instead of straining every nerve to assist them to struggle with honour, and if possible to extricate them from the difficulties which were starting up before them, ill suited the noble spirit of an ingenuous and manly youth. "No," said he, "it must not be. "To enjoy such love, I must not be undeserving of "it. I will, I must leave you. Pray, my dear Sir, "inform Mr. Cowper that the matter is decided, "and let him recommend me as he promised."— "I cannot," cried Mrs. Aubrey, "bear the thought "of your going to the West Indies. Cannot some- "thing be thought of for him in England, Aubrey?" —"As we have not means to enable him to pursue "a profession," replied Aubrey, "England presents "no hope of success. In the West Indies I under- "stand, that under the patronage of a man of power, "there are many certain roads open to fortune."— —"By all means the West Indies, Sir," said Arthur, "I would rather die than be toiling at home "for a pittance that could be of no service to you. "Abroad, with the knowledge I already have of "figures, I shall soon make myself a man of business, "and business will make me a man of fortune: be "assured, my dear mother, I will put my shoulder to

" the wheel, and have you all out of the slough in " less time than you may suppose: the girls shall " have fortunes, and I will teach Arthur-William to " make one. We have only to look forward a little. " Besides, I ought to see the world; I ought to see " mankind in different states and situations of life. " Call my absence my travels, and you will be re- " conciled to it; and if I do not bring you an ac- " count of France and Italy, I will of men and man- " ners, of seas and climates, of liberty and slavery, " of sugar canes and coffee."—" The climate! the " climate!" exclaimed Mrs. Aubrey. " My dear " mother," said Arthur, taking her hand, and press- ing it warmly to his bosom, " my father has taught " me to rely on Providence; I will endeavour to " deserve his care, and to return to you: but Ma- " riton is not our home; if it be his will that we " should meet in another world, oh! we shall be " still happier there even than we have been in " this." Tears came into the eyes of Mrs. Aubrey and his sisters. " I did not mean to make you shed " tears," cried he, his own starting at the same time; " if you do not help me I shall have no reso- " lution; my heart is so tied to you, I shall forget " the shame of sloth, in the sweetness of your " smiles."—" But the West Indies!" said his mo- ther: " I am but too well acquainted with that part " of the world from your grandfather's account of " it, not to dread it for you in every respect. " Though his property was in the West Indies, and " he obliged to be frequently there, yet he never " would take me with him, or suffer the thought of " my going thither."—" Yes," said Arthur, " but " there is a great deal of difference between a young " man, and a fine girl brought up as you were. I " have not a doubt that I shall escape like many " others, and then you will be happy that you con-

"sented to my going." Mrs. Aubrey could not consent heartily, but after a little more conversation on the necessity of Arthur's taking an active part in life, she ceased to oppose the plan, and Aubrey wrote to Mr. Cowper requesting him to apply immediately to his friend.

Meanwhile, time passed on at the Parsonage, divided between the enjoyment of present delights and the anticipation of evil. The household affairs were well managed by Betty and Mrs. Miller. Nanny and Patty were not even missed, except in the expenditure of the kitchen, which was so reduced, as to create a fair suspicion that the sisters had not been faithful in their trust. The most painful duty that occurred during the summer fell chiefly on Emily and Arthurina, who, in consequence of an answer from Mr. Cowper, bestowed some time in the preparation of a stock of linen for their brother, to be ready for the sailing of the Christmas ships. Aubrey's credit with his tradesmen gradually declined, till at last, towards the end of the summer, his family could obtain nothing but for prompt payment; he was therefore under the necessity of husbanding the stipend he received from Dr. Bowes, and its inadequacy to the usual supplies alarmed and afflicted him.

Impatient of repeated procrastinations, several of Aubrey's creditors began to make their demands in a decided tone: two had actually commenced actions against him, and at length awakened an apprehension that his person was not secure. He was one morning in the month of November, expressing this apprehension to Mrs. Aubrey, and preparing his family against a surprise which might overwhelm them with despair, when Cæsar coming into the sitting-room, told him he was wanted. He immediately went into the parlour, where he saw two

men, to one of whom, named Crichton, he had rendered great services, having been the means of relieving his family from a dreadful state of distress. "Hah! Crichton," said he, "I am glad to see you. "Is there any thing I can do for you?" The man stood at a respectful distance without speaking, till Aubrey asked him if he had any thing particular to say to him; "Sir," replied he, "I am very un- "fortunate in being obliged by the nature of my "duty to—to—to perform my duty, Sir."—"What "is your duty?" said Aubrey: on which the man put a slip of paper into his hand. Aubrey was not unprepared to find it a writ, but he was surprised to find it in the possession of Crichton, who now informed him that he had been lately appointed a sheriff's officer. He still kept at a distance, and had not power to complete the arrest by touching his benefactor. Aubrey seeing this, went forward and took him by the hand. Shocked at being a prisoner, he was extremely anxious to keep the knowledge of it from his family till he had taken some step to extricate himself, and he desired Crichton to send away his follower. This was immediately done, and Aubrey dispatched Cæsar for Mr. Browne. In the mean time he took Crichton into the garden and passed before the sitting-room, that the family might see who was with him. The worthy Mr. Browne returned with Cæsar: he was well known to Crichton, who, without the slightest hesitation, took his word that he should have sufficient bail for the debt, which was a hundred and fifty pounds, and saying he would call upon Mr. Browne, gladly hastened from the Parsonage.

For some time Aubrey kept this circumstance a secret from Mrs. Aubrey and his children, but it preyed upon his heart, and his absences of mind rendered them wretched. He made a statement of

his debts, which now amounted to upwards of two thousand pounds, and he saw no means by which he could possibly hope ever to discharge them: nor had he reason to flatter himself that his creditors would make allowance for his inadvertence, or be satisfied with his possession of principles which he had not had virtue and foresight enough to draw forth into practice, so that his breast was torn at once by compunction for injustice, and by the horrid images of the dearest objects of his heart involved in the consequences of imprisonment and want. The load was too heavy for his heart; it was the first he had ever attempted to bear without the assistance of his Emily, and he was at length constrained to give vent to his sorrow. "Yes, Emily," said he to Mrs. Aubrey, after giving an account of his arrest and bail, "this is our situation, from which I know not how "we can be delivered but by Providence. I shall "now be soon called upon to surrender myself in "order to exonerate my bail; and in consequence "of the other actions against me, all the comforts "of life will be torn from you. Yes, my love, I "have been apprized that executions are intended to "be thrown in on the Parsonage. Oh! that we had "had a resolution like Cowper's! that we had been "wiser than to live upon hope! that we had faced "poverty in its terrifying form, rather than have "suffered it to overtake us with dishonesty at its "side! Clear of debt, we might have lived hap-"pily on bread and water, which will now be ren-"dered bitter by the remembrance of the wrong we "have done."—"My dear Sir," said Arthur, "you "were deceived by a base pretender to friendship: "on his head be the consequence of his deceit, "your mind is pure of designed wrong. Dishonest! "You, Sir, dishonest! Oh no. Your creditors, at "least those whose passions do not absorb their

" reason, may be hurt, may blame you in some re-
" spects, but cannot charge you with dishonesty."
—" My boy," replied Aubrey, " I should have been
" wiser than to live on hope. Never, never, be
" tempted to contract a debt, of which the payment
" is not as sure as the cause for which it is contract-
" ed. Avoid it, my son, more earnestly than death,
" the thought of which is sweet, when compared
" with the bitter reflections accompanying debt."
Having expatiated some time on the horrors of debt, and said that it was his intention to live if possible on half of his stipend, that the other half might be offered to his creditors, to prevent their proceeding against him with rigour, Aubrey adverted to Arthur's situation: " The time," said he, " is come for
" you to leave us, my son; the ships are now sailing
" for the West Indies, but your departure must be
" delayed, for I have not the means of enabling you
" to go."—" Well, my dear father," said Arthur,
" I can stay till the spring; it is perhaps better. I
" should be wretched to leave you in your present
" dilemma: in a few months matters may wear a
" fairer aspect. Your creditors may be softened
" by your resolution to put by a part of your pit-
" tance for the discharge of your debts, and I shall
" be rewarded for sharing your distress, by seeing
" you before I go, out of the dangers which threaten
" you, at present."—" It is the will of God, my dear
" Arthur," said Aubrey, " and to that, be it what
" it may, we will submit." The delay of Arthur's departure till the spring, was a cordial to the hearts of Mrs. Aubrey, Emily, and Arthurina, to whom no misfortune seemed so replete with wretchedness, as the loss of so beloved an object.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Melford—Conversation between Mr. Cowper and Edmund—Unexpected result of it—The power of fancy—Mariton Parsonage.

While these unhappy scenes were passing at Mariton, Mr. Cowper and the Smyths were not forgetful of their friends. Seldom a day passed without their being made the subject of conversation; and how to be of use to them was ever in Mr. Cowper's view. He had spoken of Aubrey to Mr. Grey, who was long unwilling to think that he required assistance in the discharge of his duty; but, though his mind was unsubdued by time, his nerves were convinced, by the approach of winter, that a curate was necessary; and observing to his friend Cowper that he felt himself called upon to yield to the progress of nature, he begged him to make the appointment, mentioning a hundred a year as the salary he should annex to it, the curate having to provide himself with a house.

As soon as Mr. Cowper was sure of the curacy of Melford for Aubrey, he resolved to dispatch Edmund to Mariton with the tidings; and to render the commission still more delightful to his nephew, he had a conversation with him previous to his journey respecting the Aubreys, which opened an unexpected prospect of happiness. "You are now, "my dear Edmund," said Mr. Cowper, "arrived "at that period of life, which your understanding "and self-command, rather than your years, denote "to be the commencement of manhood. I believe "it has been accelerated by your pursuits, and by "the confidence which I have placed in you from "your infancy. The events of my life are all well

" known to you; my first dreams of affluence and " bliss; my subsequent real misery and struggles " with poverty; my present comfortable state of " competence, earned by my own care and *your* as- " sistance. Our labour becomes easier every day " by the increase of our means; but it must be con- " tinued; or, instead of advancing in prosperity, " we shall relapse into want and distress. But of this " there is no fear: you, however, must now take the " labouring oar; and *I* must assist *you*. I do not " put it into your hands because I am glad to get " rid of it myself, but because it is an instrument of " happiness which will sweeten every agreeable oc- " currence of your life, and rob adverse ones of " their bitterness. A thorn was planted at your " birth, my boy; but successful employment has " blunted every point, and will through life. I am " glad, beyond expression, to observe the greatness " of your soul, which disdains a fortune so unjustly " withheld from you. I know not whether it would " not rather be a calamity than a happiness were " your father now to alter your happy mediocrity for " unsettled expectations." Here Edmund assured his uncle that he could never consider any other than him as his father. " How he has contrived to " evade me so long after his behaviour at Okeham," continued Cowper, " is inexplicable; yet I am not " surprised at it. I was then determined to pursue " him through the courts of justice; but, after all, " we should perhaps be only giving up ease for " trouble and vexation. At least, for the present, " we will drop the idea, and proceed as if there were " no such connexion on earth. Then, my dear Ed- " mund, I hope that the arrangement I have been " contemplating will give you pleasure. You must " become the manager, and of course the proprietor " of our little property. If I have a gratification in

"thinking that you will be master of it after my "death, I take a degree of romantic delight in an- "ticipating it in the close of my life; and it is thus "I sum up all my remaining views on earth: to see "our lands improving and increasing as yours; your "mother and me supported and blessed by you and "your sister; Harriet provided for; and you settled "for life." The last expression struck Edmund particularly; yet he was uncertain what it meant. He looked at his uncle, as if for an explanation. "Harriet," continued Mr. Cowper, "is in a man- "ner already provided for; thanks to our sainted "friend Dr. Searle. I have devoted his legacy of "a thousand pounds to her. It will be enough if "she continue single; but, as she may be prevailed "upon to marry, you must consider yourself bound "to pay her another thousand when she does; and "of course you will in the mean time provide for "the contingency. These are the only conditions "with which your little estate shall be encumbered; "and it is now equal to the terms, and much more: "it is equal to the support of a family of your own." Edmund's looks bespoke the anxiety which this language excited in his mind. "Where there is "provision for a family," proceeded Cowper, "I love "early marriages: hearts assimilate, the husband "and the wife partake the same events, pursue the "same trains of thought, grow together, and be- "come really one. My advice to you, Edmund, is "to become a husband as soon as you can: with re- "spect to you, it is now the only thing I have to "wish." Edmund's heart palpitated with contend- ing fears and hopes. Could his uncle mean a mar- riage that might increase his prosperous manage- ment of the property, or would he encourage one where not a shilling could be looked for? He was embarrassed and silent. Mr. Cowper saw what was

passing in his mind; he was no stranger to Edmund's attachment; and he was happy to turn it to the accomplishment of his views for Aubrey; for, in pondering on his fate, he had, in imagination, married his nephew to Emily, and Sensitive to Arthurina; and had thrown Arthur into Fortune's way under the guidance of his West-Indian friend. "It is not "for me, Edmund," continued he, "to direct the "heart to love; your choice must be your own: I "shall only hint that I attach as little importance to "a woman's fortune as you can. I have no objec- "tion to it; but when there is enough on the hus- "band's side, I think it a matter of indifference; "and I should prefer some girls in their every-day "clothes to others with thirty thousand pounds; for "instance, an Emily Aubrey to a Miss Spicer." Edmund, transported, threw himself into his uncle's arms, crying, "Oh Sir! Oh my uncle! Oh my fa- "ther! You know my heart; I see you know my "heart." When his rapture moderated, he avowed his passion for Emily; and, having received his uncle's consent to solicit her hand, conversed with him on his plans for the Aubreys, felt his heart swell with love and benevolence, and expressed his impatience to accomplish his uncle's god-like designs. "Au- "brey," said Mr. Cowper, "must be considerably "embarrassed; but to what extent I do not exactly "know. He will certainly want some assistance in "removing; and I am very much afraid, as we have "heard nothing of your friend Arthur's preparation "for his voyage, that his father has not been able "to furnish the means. Now, I do not know what "I can do better with the other thousand pounds, "left at my disposal by Dr. Searle, than appropri- "ate a part of the sum by way of loan to Aubrey; "I say *loan*, for we must now act with double deli- "cacy towards him. You shall therefore carry with

" you five hundred pounds; and, if that should not " be enough, he shall have as much of the remainder " as may be wanted."—" Noble, generous man!" exclaimed Edmund, " God will bless you here, and " hereafter."

At the conclusion of this conversation it was resolved that Edmund should set off for Mariton without delay, and without apprizing his friends of his journey. His joy at first was boundless, but he suddenly became thoughtful; and Mr. Cowper, being at a loss to account for it, requested he would explain it. " Oh Sir!" said he, " the selfishness of " my rapture made me forget for a moment the un- " towardness of my friend's lot."—" I understand " you," said Cowper, " and your feelings do you " honour. It cannot be, my dear boy: but, to re- " lieve you as much as I can, tell your friend from " me to be prudent, and I think it highly probable " that your sister may one day or other be his; but " he is going to the West Indies; I will have no en- " gagement made at present."—" I thank you, in " his name, my dear uncle," replied Edmund, " for " the hope alone, and I answer for his being satis- " fied with it. I shall now set off with delight." Loaded with kind remembrances, and affectionate messages, he took his leave of Melford. His uncle drove him in his one-horse chaise to Gloucester, whence he travelled in a public carriage as far as Loughborough; there he hired a porter to carry his portmanteau to Mariton, setting out, however, so as to precede him in arriving at the Parsonage.

How did Edmund's heart glow as he drew near to a mansion which contained so large a portion of his affection! The occurrences of his former visit came all fresh to his memory; his rambles with the family; his rides with Arthur; his fall into the river; Emily's plunge after him; his hopeless passion. To

these images succeeded the still more delightful ones of his unexpected appearance; of his communicating the joyful tidings respecting the curacy of Melford; of his presenting the means of effecting a removal; of his daring to talk of love to Emily. When he came within sight of the house, his fancy penetrated the walls, ran through the apartments, where utility and taste combined to afford convenience and to charm the eye, and he grouped the beloved inhabitants in that pleasant well-remembered room, where he had so often listened, enchanted, to the voice of Emily. Her he placed at her beautiful fine-toned piano, harmonizing extempore melody; which, though rapt in thought, she swelled occasionally with her own vocal tones, at times desisting and again falling in as if by accident: he had more than once observed her thus. He seated Arthur in a reclining posture, on the sopha, listening to her spontaneous strains; Arthurina, drawing at the table, had put down her pencil to attend more fixedly to the heavenly sounds with which her sister had, unconsciously, attracted the admiration of the whole party; Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey were sitting by each other, near a cheerful fire, gazing at the lovely musician; and Arthur-William, examining a large map on the carpet, had his finger at the place he was engaged in, while his eyes and ears were all Emily's. Thus beguiling the way with the fairy pictures of imagination, Edmund, warmed by walking and emotion, approached the Parsonage. The day, however, was one of those raw and misty ones which are so frequent in an English winter. When he rang at the gate, his great-coat and hat shook off a slight shower. "Come, "Cæsar, come;" cried he, hastening the worthy negro, who, not observing the person that appeared at the rails of the gate, was proceeding slowly

through the court. The sound of Edmund's voice roused him from his lethargic pace, and he greeted the youth with a kind inquiry and a cordial air. "Where's the family, my good fellow?" said Edmund, hastening into the hall, where he stopped alarmed at what he saw. The place was filled with furniture packed up: he could not conceive the meaning of it; and moved on to the sitting-room: alas! how unlike the picture he had drawn on the way. No fire was in the grate, the carpet was rolled up, the mirrors removed, the piano-forte cased. "What can this mean?" cried he to Cæsar, who had followed him: "where is Mr. Aubrey? Where "is Arthur? Are they going away?" Before the negro could answer, two men came into the room to carry out some of the articles; and, as the door opened, Mrs. Miller's voice was heard calling Cæsar, who immediately obeyed the summons, leaving Edmund in amazement. He could not bear it; he followed; and, as he reached the staircase, he heard distinctly the voices of Arthur, Emily, and Arthurina call out, "Good heaven! Edmund?" He flew up; they ran to meet him; and, in a moment, he found himself enclosed in the embraces of all the three, Arthur exclaiming, "Edmund!" while his sisters poured a shower of tears upon his arms. "But tell me," cried he, "tell me what is "the matter; and why you are packing up." Unaccustomed to the processes of the law, Edmund was not struck with the idea of an execution, till Arthur, pressing his hand, said: "You are come at "a very melancholy moment, my dear friend; you "are come to see the house stript of every thing in "it: the goods are lawfully taken for the payment "of some of my father's debts."—"Oh Heavens!" cried Edmund, suddenly comprehending the nature of the calamity, "is it possible any man can be so

"hard-hearted? But it shall not be done."—"It "cannot be prevented;" said Arthur. "It can; it "shall;" said Edmund, returning hastily down stairs; as hastily accompanied by his three young friends. They seemed to skim over the steps to the bottom, where they suddenly stopped by an impulse of Emily's; who, fearful of Edmund's emotion betraying him into an impropriety, caught him by the arm, and said: "Mr. Smyth, take care; I beg you "to take care: Papa, Sir," continued she, bursting again into tears, "papa is up stairs; speak to *him*." —"Dear, dear Miss Aubrey," cried he, awed by her manner, and tortured by her tears, "I will obey "you; but let me first say one word to these men." She no longer prevented him: he stepped forward, but not out of sight of his friends, and, in a low, mild tone requested the officer, who came up to him, not to proceed, as he had reason to think that the money, for which the things were taken, would be immediately paid into his hands. The officer promising to wait till Edmund had spoken with Aubrey, he returned to his friends, and accompanied them up stairs.

The whole family, at the time Edmund rang, were sitting together in Mrs. Aubrey's chamber, whither Arthur led him without ceremony; and where he found Aubrey, Mrs. Aubrey, Arthur-William, and Mrs. Miller. They gave him an affectionate, though a melancholy welcome; and he lost no time in communicating the offer of the curacy of Melford. He then requested to speak alone with Aubrey; which Mrs. Aubrey interpreted into a signal of some new calamity. "Indeed it is not," cried Edmund. "If "so, my dear friend," said Aubrey, "speak here, "we have no secrets, Edmund." Afraid of mentioning the money he had in his pocket, with any degree of indelicacy, Edmund looked round with

some embarrassment, and then addressing Aubrey said: "The fact is, my dear Mr. Aubrey, I am uneasy "lest you should make my uncle unhappy by refus- "ing him a favour on which he has set his heart."— "I can refuse your uncle nothing that he will ask," replied Aubrey, "but let me first tell you that, if "the request be to make the change immediately "from Mariton to Melford, compliance will not be "in my power."—"Nay, but indeed, Sir," replied Edmund, "it is in your power."—"To banish all "reserve," said Aubrey, "know that I am so in- "volved in debt in this part of the country, that a "removal will be impossible, except such a one as "will give your uncle great pain."—"All this you "may surmount, my dear Sir, if you will condescend "to take the loan of a sum my uncle can spare, and "which I am come to offer you." Edmund saying this, cast his eyes on Emily, and was rewarded with as sweet a look of approbation as was ever bestowed on man by beautiful eyes glistening with tears. Having got over this difficult pitch in the way of delicacy, he briefly, and with ease, acquainted Aubrey with Mr. Cowper's proposal, and begged that he would not reject it. The Aubreys, charmed with the divine character of Mr. Cowper, were all of them loud in his praise; and Edmund, construing their kind expressions into concurrence, intreated Aubrey to dismiss the men that were below.

Obligation to such a man as Cowper could never be painful, and the alternative was too frightful to be endured: Aubrey therefore consented to go down with his young friend, who, anxious that Mrs. Aubrey should not be hurt in his presence, by the confused appearance of the house, begged her to remain in her room with Miss Aubrey and Arthurina till he returned for them. "May *I* come for you? "or is it *Arthur's* place?" said he. "God bless

"you!" replied Mrs. Aubrey, "it cannot but be "gratifying to me that you should consider any of- "fice of my son's as desirable." He then went out of the room with Aubrey and Arthur, leaving Mrs. Aubrey and the girls admiring and blessing him. They made their way through the confusion of the hall into the study, which had remained untouched. The business was soon settled; the amount of the executions was for three hundred and fifty pounds: the officer produced an inventory of the property he had levied for that sum, which, on receiving the money from Edmund, he advised should be made over to him as a *bona fide* purchaser, that the articles might not again be liable to a levy. To this Edmund was a little averse; but, the reason being too evident, he consented, and took a receipt from the officer, who delivered the things to him, and promised to execute a formal deed of conveyance. "That will do another time, my worthy friend," said Edmund, "but at present you will greatly "oblige me by making the men, with as much ex- "pedition as possible, put every article in its pro- "per place; they shall be amply compensated if "they make haste. Pray, Sir," continued he, addressing Aubrey, "do not go to the ladies till every "thing is arranged." In a moment all was bustle; the men, eager for their reward, were more expeditious in replacing than they had been in disturbing the order of the house; Cæsar and Betty gave helping hands with smiling countenances; and Edmund and Arthur exerted themselves together; while Aubrey locked himself up in his study, to adore his heavenly benefactor, and to humble himself for his want of ability and virtue to meet with rectitude the dispensations of his providence.

By the united energy, produced by the view of remuneration, and by the superior excitement of

love and greatness of mind, the Parsonage, in less than an hour, wore its usual appearance; and a blazing fire gave additional cheerfulness to that room where Edmund's fancy had painted his harmonizing angel unconsciously enchanting her own loved group. No sooner were the men discharged than he flew up to Mrs. Aubrey's chamber, saying, as he entered, "I have taken Arthur's place, and am "come for my mother." Mrs. Aubrey pressed him to her bosom, kissed him with the warmth of a mother, and called him her son. The kisses of his own mother had never been sweeter to him, bestowed as Mrs. Aubrey's was in the presence of his Emily, and accompanied with a title for which he longed, and for which he was come to sue. He handed her down stairs, followed by the girls; and felt a greater pleasure than he had ever experienced in his life, when he placed her in her chair by the fire-side. On the countenance of Aubrey there still hung a gloom which Edmund and Arthur strove to dissipate by talking of Mr. Cowper and Melford, of a speedy settlement in that delightful spot, and of effects to be hoped from frugality and agriculture. Aubrey, not insensible to their amiable efforts, strove to be cheerful, and was at length successful. But his cheerfulness was not that of oblivion; he reflected more than ever on his situation, and he foresaw similar recurrences of the terrible dilemma from which he had been relieved by friendship—a friendship that could not be again exerted, and if it could, ought not to be permitted. The time was approaching too when it would be incumbent upon him to surrender his person in discharge of his bail; and he had, soon after his arrest, written to Dr. Bowes to inform him that it would probably be out of his power to continue his curate. He pondered on his wayward fate, and reproached the memory of

his uncle; but could see no prospect of surmounting his difficulties, till at length he thought of calling his creditors together, laying his situation before them, and requesting their direction. He communicated this idea to Arthur and Edmund, and the latter begged he would allow him to write previously on the subject to his uncle, to which Aubrey assented, and likewise wrote himself.

The letters dispatched, the two lads had time to talk upon the themes in which their hearts were so warmly interested. As soon as they were alone in the next morning's ramble, Edmund delivered his uncle's message to Arthur, saying at the same time that he wished, with all his heart, that it was not necessary for him to go abroad; for that he was certain, that Harriet was sensible of his attachment, and waited only a fair opportunity to convince him of it:—"But what is to be done," my dear friend, continued he, "as matters stand at present?"—"My dear Edmund," replied Arthur, "your uncle "is right; I felt the justness of his sentiment before "you brought me his kind message; and even while "under the same roof with your sister; while she "was here, I determined not to involve her in the "adverse fate to which I am doomed. I love, and "shall love her as long as I breathe; but I have ba-"nished all thoughts of marrying. No, Edmund, "it must not be; while my family are in distress, I "shall endeavour to bend all my efforts to extricate "them, and devote my life to their comfort. What "I have suffered lately, from the events that have "taken place at the Parsonage, has opened my eyes "to life, and convinced me, that we are not born to "wish and to enjoy, but to struggle and be patient. "I am well disposed to struggle, but I am afraid I "shall have no footing to bear me up in the forlorn "state of our affairs: it is not in my father's power

" even to enable me to go abroad."—" I was afraid " of it," said Edmund, " and my uncle told me he " thought so; but as your plan is the only hope you " have of recovering a state of competence, it must " be effected. I have written to my uncle for as " much money as he can spare, and I hope it will " be enough, not only to satisfy your father's cre- " ditors for the present, but to set you off."—" Ed- " mund!" said Arthur, " words cannot express to " you the opinion I have of your virtue, nor the " purity of my friendship; but I know you will think " I give you the best proof of both, in assuring you " that I warmly wish your hope may be realized." Then turning the conversation—" Will not the re- " sidence of our family at Melford," said he, " be " a source of misery to you, Edmund? To behold " daily the object of love, while one is doomed to " relinquish hope, must be of all states the most " miserable! Your fate, my friend, will be worse " than mine." Edmund's countenance brightened. " O! Arthur," cried he, " I have such joyful news " to tell you!" He then proceeded, in the most animated manner, to disclose his uncle's approbation, the state of his affairs, and the hope he had of a comfortable provision for Emily, if he could obtain her hand. " Mr. Cowper," said Arthur, " has one of the noblest minds inhabiting the hu- " man frame. I knew you would be my brother. I " rejoice in your prospect of bliss; but to effect it, " I fear you will find requires more management " than ever; not with my father and mother, but " with Emily herself. Her consent, at present, will " have the appearance of deserting the family in the " hour of distress; added to which, it may seem to " be her interest as well as her choice."—" Oh! " but the greatness of her soul!" cried Edmund— " Is," continued Arthur, " what I am most afraid

" of; but I think I have an argument that will satisfy " her. She has refused, not only Colonel Spicer, " but our worthy friend Rowley, both men of for- " tune; this will remove the latter objection, but I " doubt her being prevailed upon to leave my fa- " ther and mother at present."—" Oh! let her con- " sent to be mine," said Edmund, " and we shall all " be as one family."—" Happy, happy Edmund!" cried Arthur, " nursed in misfortune, reared by in- " dustry, your guardian angel has been watchful " over you, and prepared for you an enviable lot; " while mine, from prosperity and the fairest pros- " pects, suffers me to sink within the view of bliss, " and permits the most flattering years of life to be " spent in absence from those who possess my heart!" The contrast was striking, the lively manner in which it was made touched Edmund to the soul. " Oh, " Arthur!" said he, " would to God it were in the " nature of things that I could take your place! But " of this be assured, that my happiness cannot be " complete till you return, even if Emily consent to " be mine." After a short pause, Arthur said, with a sigh, " I will think of you, and strive to deserve " my share, whether it be my fate or not." They now walked in silence towards the village, but before they reached it, roused from their reverie, they agreed to exert themselves to enliven the Parsonage.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Edmund's bold address—Letters from Melford—A meeting of creditors—Arrival of a stranger—Result of the meeting of creditors—Aubrey arrested—Time of removal from Mariton determined.

Edmund, encouraged by his uncle's approbation and plans, was resolved to lose no time in putting an end to every doubt respecting the fate of his attachment; but his heart told him that before he applied to Aubrey, he should have Emily's permission to do it. He did not easily find an opportunity to speak with her by herself; and he was at last obliged to ask Arthur's assistance, who, next morning, when Aubrey was employed in the study writing letters to his creditors, and Mrs. Aubrey was engaged in some domestic concerns, effected his wish by drawing away Arthurina and Arthur-William.

When Emily found herself alone with Edmund, she felt a flutter for which she could not account; but he was no longer the bashful, passive, timid lover that he was when he considered that he had no pretension to hope. "Allow me, Miss Aubrey," said he, "to take this favourable moment to entreat "your approbation of a passion you have inspired. "Oh! suffer me to take your hand, and to swear upon "it the purest, tenderest, warmest vows, which you "have taught my heart to conceive. I swear then," continued he, eagerly imprinting a kiss upon it; "I "swear——" Emily had suffered him to take her hand, but no sooner felt his kiss upon it than she recollected herself, and withdrawing it, said: "Ed-"mund, I am not insensible of your worth; you "deserve much more happiness than it is in my "power to bestow; but this is not a time, nor are

" we either of us in a situation to talk of love."—" I will convince you, Emily," cried he, " if you " will but hear me, that this *is* the fittest time, and " that I *am* in a situation, to talk of love."—" I am " glad," said she, " to hear of your prosperity; but " he at whose disposal I am is not prosperous; and " at all events I will hear of no love that he has not " advised, nor of any that he does, if he is to be " wounded by it."—" I consent, Emily," replied he, " to leave my fate in his hands; I ask but your " permission to speak to him: I have already ob- " tained my uncle's, if you will consent to it."— " Edmund," said she, " I will treat you with the " candour you deserve. I feel for you more than " common affection; and to know that you think me " worthy of yours is truly grateful to my heart; but " the thought of any alteration of life at present " cannot enter my mind. You may tell what has " now passed between us to my father and mother, " for I shall do it. Hereafter, if things take a hap- " pier turn, and they advise it, I will listen to you: " meanwhile desist from attempting to picture to " yourself or to me a happiness the enjoyment of " which would be a reproach to our minds at this " bitter juncture."—" I am satisfied, my Emily," cried Edmund, " with the delicious hope you have " given me: yes, yes, things will take a happy turn " at Melford." Saying which, he again took her hand and kissed it, nor did she refuse it. She held in it a handkerchief, which she left in his hand without uttering a word. He looked at it with rapture, and placed it in his bosom. She smiled, and said, she hoped it would never again prove so dangerous as it once had. Still more delighted to find it the handkerchief which had been the cause of his fall into the river, he kissed it again and again, and vowed he would prize it as long as he lived.

Emily then entered into some conversation with him respecting the removal of her family to Melford; and Mrs. Aubrey joining them, entered into the topics it presented with great interest. It was renewed when all the family were assembled; they were delighted to dwell upon it; and Aubrey only waited for letters from Mr. Cowper to take the preliminary steps. These were not long delayed: Aubrey and Edmund both received answers by the return of the post. To the former, Mr. Cowper, in the most friendly terms, expressed his pleasure at the determination which it had occurred to him to make; and to the latter he said, that as much of the remaining five hundred pounds of Dr. Searle's donation as was necessary to complete Aubrey's views, and effect his removal, was at his command; that the whole, within two days, should be placed in the hands of his banker at Gloucester in Edmund's name, who might draw to the full extent of it. It is not difficult to conceive the impression made by these letters at the Parsonage: a new zest was given to the esteem and affection inspired by Cowper, and admiration was accompanied by prayers for his happiness. Edmund's delight was ineffable; and he urged Aubrey to assemble his creditors as soon as possible, convinced that the offer his friend was enabled to make would satisfy them, and procure ample time for a final settlement.

A full meeting was not easily obtained, for some of the creditors were not in the neighbourhood; and Edmund had spent, not unhappily, the whole month of February at the Parsonage before it was effected, though the most pressing letters had been written on the occasion. At length a meeting was held at an inn at Loughborough, where Aubrey, accompanied only by Edmund, appeared, and plainly stated his case. "Gentlemen," said he, "my situation

" must be a most painful one to a man acquainted " with the nature of society, and sensible of the unal- " terable rules of justice. No name too harsh can " be given to one capable of coolly meditating a " breach of those rules; but, on the other hand, " some lenity is perhaps due to him who is unwarily " led, step by step, to contract debts till he finds " himself unable to pay them."—" Humph!" grunted a lusty grocer, whose knit brow bespoke a dissatisfied mind; " no man should contract a debt, un- " less he is clear he can pay it."—" It would not be " very easy, Sir," said Aubrey, roused, but not disconcerted by this remark, " to settle a definition of " the word *clear* in the sense you use it, for such " *clearness* may require a proportionate sum to be " constantly in hand: but if expectation be a suffi- " cient clearness, your observation cannot apply to " me. I never contracted a debt without a prospect " of paying it; and though I am unfortunate at pre- " sent, I still hope that it will finally be in my power " to discharge every shilling I owe."—" Humph!" said the grocer, " I have no notion of a man bring- " ing up a family to sing, pipe, and fiddle away with " my money; nor to give Sunday dinners to poor " people at my cost."—" Misfortune," said Aubrey, " naturally lays a load on the mind, which it is the " part of wisdom to lighten as much as possible, if " crime make no part of the burden. A man, Sir, " must be a monster to break the spirit of his chil- " dren, who are involved in his fate: if music will " alleviate their calamity, he would be a wretch did " he not promote it. As to little services rendered " to the needy, they should be considered as prior- " ity debts: charity is a debt due to the Almighty, " and I hope you will allow that *his* debts ought to " be first paid."—" Humph!" cried the disputant, " justice in our dealings is also a debt due to God."

—"True," rejoined Aubrey, "but what creditor's "demand is so urgent as that of the hungry and "naked? The rich can better wait."—"Humph!" replied the man, "it is in a manner dispensing "the property of another: have you a right to do "that?"—"Would to God I had the power!" cried "Aubrey, I would not debate the right: there is not a "wealthy man throughout the kingdom into whose "purse I would not plunge my hand, and while I "left him luxury, I would dispense comfort to all. "The rich should not forget that they are the ap-"pointed stewards of the poor."—"Humph! may-"hap a creditor of your's may be poor."—"That," said Aubrey, "I deny; and if he were, Justice and "Charity would go hand in hand, and I would di-"vide my last shilling with him. But I trust," continued he, "that we are not met to debate upon "my errors; I hope I see friends, not adversaries "round me; for I have called you together to state "my situation, ask your advice, and follow your di-"rections." He then stated at large the extraordinary, unforeseen loss of his family estates, the disappointment of his expectation of preferment, and his efforts to reform every superfluous expence, concluding with his wish to remove from Mariton, and his inability to offer more than a few hundreds among them; three hundred or three hundred and fifty at farthest, which was not equal to a fourth of their demands. When Aubrey ceased speaking a partial murmur was heard among the creditors; but some seemed favourable, and a miller at the bottom of the table addressing him, said: "Mr. Aubrey, I "firmly believe that were it in your power, you "would not only pay your debts, but take delight to "assist any man here; I therefore, for my part, de-"clare that I am perfectly satisfied, and if the rest "of the creditors will agree, I shall be happy to

"wait till you are able, without taking away from "you the little money that remains in your hands; "nay, I am willing to sign a receipt, and trust to "you entirely, if it is ever in your power." A dispute here arose among the creditors, who differed widely in their opinions, and proceeded to a very warm reprobation of the sentiments of one another.

In the midst of the debate Cæsar entered the room, and delivered a letter to his master from Mrs. Aubrey, containing these few lines: "A most ex- "traordinary occurrence, my dearest Aubrey, is the "occasion of my sending for you. I will not lose "time by entering into an explanation; but, lest "you should be uneasy, I will just say that this sin- "gular event is of the most fortunate nature, and "considered by me as the interposition of Provi- "dence. If possible, leave the business you are "about, and come home for an hour: you may re- "turn." On reading this note, Aubrey asked his creditors if he should leave them to consider of what he had said; and, upon their consenting, he told them that the letter he had just received mentioned a circumstance which rendered it necessary for him to go home, but that he should not be long gone.—He then left them, and set out immediately with Edmund for Mariton. From Cæsar he learned that a stranger with a superb equipage had arrived at the Parsonage, but of what nature his visit was Cæsar knew nothing. This, however, was soon explained by the gentleman himself, whom he found listening to a duet sung by Mrs. Aubrey and Emily. Mrs. Aubrey immediately introduced them to each other; and Aubrey learned that he had under his roof the young, benevolent, accomplished, handsome, and rich Mr. Hamline, of whose wealth and noble spirit he had often heard. He took Aubrey by the hand, and with the prepossessing address of virtue, beau-

ty, and accomplishment united, repeated the business he had already opened to Mrs. Aubrey. "I "am come, my dear Sir, to make you a proposal, "which I hope will meet your concurrence, as I "think it will be mutually advantageous to us. You "have never, I find, been told of Mrs. Aubrey's "title to an estate in the island of St. Kitt's."— "Title!" cried Aubrey, astonished. "Yes," replied Mr. Hamline, "as clear as mine to my "estates." He then proceeded to inform Aubrey that the estate alluded to, called Montpelier, belonged to Mr. Melvil, who had put it in trust to pay off its debts, and that at his death it was supposed to be much involved; but that having for many years made good crops, he had no doubt of its being nearly, if not entirely clear of debts: that the trustee, who was a man of no principle, appropriated the returns to himself, and had no fear of ever being called to account, the heiress having been so long unheard of. Mr. Hamline then said that he should be glad to buy the title; and that as he had the command of money, he would bring the trustee to an account. "I will make you a fair offer, Mr. Aubrey," continued he; "I know not what the full value may "be, or how the accounts stand, and I must be at a "considerable expense; therefore I propose to give "you five thousand pounds for the title; if it prove "worth more I shall not be backward in a further "advance." This was indeed a most unexpected event; nor did Aubrey want much persuasion to close with the offer: he was sufficiently acquainted with the character of Mr. Hamline to know that he would make no proposal that was not only just but generous. The bargain was concluded to the general joy of the whole family; and it was agreed that the conveyance should be made as soon as possible, with all the due formalities of law. Aubrey then

inquired by what means Mr. Hamline had discovered the title to be in Mrs. Aubrey. "By the merest "accident," said Mr. Hamline, "which arose from "the delay of your son's going to St. Kitt's; for it "was to me that Mr. Cowper applied before Christ-"mas in his favour. I again received a letter from "him last week, accounting for the delay in an "amiable, friendly manner; and mentioning, in or-"der to interest me the more for Mr. Aubrey, his "mother being the daughter of a West-Indian of "St. Kitt's, of the name of Melvil; so that I learn-"ed by the most unlooked-for hazard what I had "been above a year endeavouring to discover. "Hearing how welcome the tidings might be to "you, I determined to come down to Mariton; and "I shall be very happy to prove myself a friend to "the family. The spring ships will be sailing in "about six weeks, and if Mr. Aubrey goes out I "have no doubt of being able to be of service to "him." Arthur assured him he should be proud of a patron of such a character; and Aubrey invited him to pass a few days at the Parsonage. To this he consented; and, being made acquainted with the business at Loughborough, proposed to take Aubrey over in his carriage, and settle it at once. The offer was accepted. On the road Aubrey gave an account of the characters he had to deal with, and it was determined to know what the resolution of the creditors was before he proceeded to settle with them.

When he met them, the majority had sour faces. One said, "Lookee, Mr. Aubrey, I cannot do with-"out my money, and so I am determined to have "it."—"I'll have all or none," said another. "So "will I."—"And I," said a third and fourth. On the other hand, several assured him that they would never trouble him: and among these, to his great

surprise, was his first opponent, who spoke to him with a civility and kindness that won his heart. "I "meant nothing by my bluntness," said he, "but "to try you; pray think no more of what you owe "me; I never shall."—"However blunt the lan- "guage of a man," said Aubrey, "the heart that "dictates such generosity cannot but be noble: but "I rejoice more than I can tell you, in having it in "my power to convince you that it is not shown to "one capable of abusing it. Have the goodness to "write a receipt for the full amount of what I owe "you, and I will immediately pay it." The ge- nerous grocer instantly produced his pocket-book, noted the sum, and began to write, while others of the creditors murmured, and said it was unfair to pay one in preference to the rest. Aubrey then ad- dressed the miller at the bottom of the table, re- questing that he would also write a receipt. The honest miller was with difficulty prevailed upon to do it; for, though sixty pounds was money, thank God he did not want it, and it was pulling a man to pieces to take his all from him. Aubrey made the same request of the other creditors who had disco- vered some milk of human kindness. He then ap- plied to Mr. Hamline, who gave separate drafts to the creditors, according to their respective de- mands. Upon being paid, the grocer seemed anxi- ous to be gone; but Aubrey detained him to witness the conclusion of the meeting; and thus addressed the creditors who remained unpaid: "In spite of "the candid representation I made of the dread- "ful state of my affairs, which evidently was not the "effect of dishonest designs; in spite of the humane "example set by these gentlemen, who have dou- "bled my obligation to them, it is clearly your in- "tention to push me to the utmost distress, to the "horrors of destitution, to want, and a prison. Are

" ye men ? creatures of the same species with these ?
" Will my sufferings, the sufferings of my innocent
" family put one shilling into your pocket ? or is it
" the wicked gratification of revenge that ye seek ?
" I call upon you, in the name of your Creator, in
" that of your Saviour, to reflect, to examine your
" hearts, and not to suffer them to be corroded by
" that selfishness and avarice by which so many
" souls are lost. If I can but awaken you to a sense
" of humanity, you will be in debt to me infinitely
" more than I now am to you; and I hope my pre-
" sent conduct will have some effect. I have, though
" undesignedly, encroached on your property, and
" wonder not that you are angry: but you might
" have been angry with consideration; and be as-
" sured that no earthly law would be sufficient to ac-
" quit you of the consequences of inhumanity. The
" law that gives you a right to tear me from my fa-
" mily, and cast me into a dungeon to become the
" victim of despair, can only be justified by the want
" of other means to ensure the fidelity of contracts;
" and immortalized will he be who shall be the in-
" strument of providing an adequate substitute for
" so baneful, so arbitrary a power as is now lodged
" in the hands of individuals; a substitute which,
" while it enforces justice, shall disappoint the mer-
" ciless. An hour ago I was more willing than able
" to pay you; at present I am more able than will-
" ing. Would to God! I could fund what I owe
" you, for the certain maintenance of some poor fa-
" milies; and, though I did not pay you a shilling,
" my conscience would acquit me: but I know the
" law, and I submit to it, content with the difference I
" have made in the mode of paying men so different
" in their nature." He then discharged the remain-
ing debts, and took receipts. Mr. Hamline was
highly gratified with the manner in which Aubrey

had settled the business; and they returned to Mariton, the one glowing with delight at the seasonable visit he had made, the other with a heart relieved of a heavy burden. On the way Aubrey descanted with pleasure on the conduct of his favourable creditors, particularly on the virtue of the blunt grocer; but, when the carriage stopped at the Parsonage gate, he was extremely surprised, on getting out, to find himself once more arrested. The arrest, however, soon became a subject of mirth, when it was known that it was at the suit of the virtuous grocer, who, not expecting the result of the meeting, had prepared to have Aubrey taken at the door of his house, at the very time he assured him that he would never trouble him. Crichton, the officer, advised an action for a false arrest; but Aubrey contented himself with a laugh, and the ejaculation of "precious hypocrite!" The Aubreys now began to think themselves again the favourites of Heaven. Mr. Hamline staid near a week with them, during which the articles of agreement for Montpelier, the Melvil estate, was executed between him and Aubrey; and the former offered the latter any part of the purchase-money, though it was necessary to wait some time for the perfecting of the conveyance, which could not be made without the separate examination of Mrs. Aubrey. Aubrey took enough for immediate expenses, and his removal to Melford; and Mr. Hamline left the Parsonage, after inviting Arthur to make his house in town his home previous to his sailing. An account of these events was immediately transmitted to Mr. Cowper, who, on consideration of Arthur's approaching departure, consented to Edmund's remaining to the last with his friend: and Aubrey being resolved on leaving Mariton as soon as possible, again wrote to Dr. Bowes, to urge him to provide

for the service of the church by the beginning of the month of April.

CHAPTER L.

Being the longest, as well as the last, the contents of which it would be impolicy to prefix.

The unexpected event which enabled Aubrey to discharge all his debts, and to consider himself master of a surplus of nearly three thousand pounds, restored that equanimity of spirits, and that large balance of happiness with which the Aubreys seemed to be favoured by nature. The time between Mr. Hamline's departure, and the period for their removal to Melford, was spent with that double relish which is usually the effect of contrasted feelings; but that their enjoyment might not be more than human, it was occasionally and frequently mingled with the painful reflection, that Arthur was soon to be separated from them. Poor Arthur, who felt himself doomed by fate to be torn from those whom he held most dear, still had room in his heart for sympathy, in the happiness he saw restored, and for delight at the good fortune of his friend Edmund, who, obtaining the consent of Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey to woo his Emily, had been blessed with her approbation as a lover: for Aubrey, on consulting with Mrs. Aubrey, and at her request, had declared his intention to give each of his daughters seven hundred pounds at her wedding, to devote five to the equipment and advancement of Arthur, and to keep the rest of his fortune, amounting to about a thousand pounds, to help the stipend of the curacy, or to be turned to advantage for advancing

Arthur-William, and for forming a fund for Mrs. Aubrey, in case of his own death. The family were going to a place, where, with the fruit of their experience, they might practise all the frugality necessary to independence; the rational distribution of the little fortune which had so providentially sprung from the Melvil estate, had hushed pride into felicity; and the settlement of the girls, under the protection of worthy men, was contemplated by Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey with the highest satisfaction.

The time for quitting Mariton approaching, every arrangement for the purpose was made, the bills were paid, the articles necessary to precede the family packed up and sent off, and the Aubreys took a formal leave of the inhabitants, little grieved to leave any of them, except the Cambridges; for Mr. Rowley was still abroad. A few days before their departure, the new curate of Mariton came to take possession, and purchased the principal part of the furniture which suited the Parsonage. It was unanimously agreed that Arthur should accompany the family to Melford, where Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey would leave the girls and Arthur-William, and proceed to London with Arthur, to fix his voyage, and to complete the conveyance of the Melvil estate. Just as Aubrey had named the day for the commencement of their journey, Cæsar came in with two letters, one from the post to Aubrey, and one brought by an express, directed to Arthur. Great was the surprise of the party, when Arthur read his aloud as follows:—

"Lord Sudley earnestly desires to see Mr. Ar-
"thur Aubrey without a moment's delay: his Lord-
"ship's physicians have declared that he cannot re-
"cover, and it is his intention, for more reasons
"than one, but particularly on account of the brave
"manner in which Mr. Aubrey saved his life in the

" grounds of Sudley castle, to leave him the whole " of his disposable fortune. This note is dictated " by Lord Sudley, to his apothecary, who, at his " Lordship's desire, is to forward it immediately by " an express. Lord Sudley, anxious to see Mr. " Aubrey before he dies, urges his immediate com- " pliance.

" Sudley castle, April 6th."

It was clear, from this note, that Edmund's design, in leaving Lord Sudley to learn his name at his steward's house, had succeeded, and that his Lordship had heard of Arthur, and not of him: but the effect it had produced had never entered his head, and he now wished that Arthur, instead of himself, had been his deliverer. On reflection, however, neither he nor his friends thought that advantage could be taken of the present disposition of the Peer, at least to the extent suggested in the note; for a legal deprivation of property was, in such cases, no less a moral robbery. At all events, Arthur was the last person in the world who could stand forward to reap the advantage; and it was resolved that Lord Sudley should be informed of his mistake; but whether personally, or by letter, was left to be decided next day at Leicester, where, by appointment in the letter received by Aubrey, which was from Melford, the Aubreys were to meet Mr. Cowper and the Smyths, whose journey Mr. Cowper's letter will show to be neither inconsiderate nor needless. It was as follows:—

" My dear Aubrey—As you are all ready to start, " will you set out on receiving this, and meet me, " with my sister and Harriet, at Leicester, on the " 10th? This is no compliment to you, but our " journey is in consequence of an invitation I have " received from Mr. Bowater, to meet Smyth at his

" house. I take his wife and daughter with me to " the inn, where he was seen by the former, as it " may lead to something. As I hope to find you all " there, I will only add our best regards," &c.

This intelligence immediately determined Aubrey to set out next morning, and Cæsar was dispatched to bespeak carriages. Edmund was at first considerably agitated, but virtue soon allayed the tumult of feeling. He said, that he had no ambition to be owned by such a father; and as for fortune, though he should delight in throwing it at the feet of his Emily, it might be purchased too dearly. The Cambridges spent the last day with the Aubreys, and again came the next morning early to see them off. Betty, whose conduct had done her so much credit, was, at her own request, included in the removal, but staid to spend a week with her friends, as well as to take charge of some things that were left behind, to be sent by the carrier. The family, after taking an affectionate leave of the worthy amiable Cambridges, set out, Aubrey and Mrs. Aubrey with Arthurina, Arthur-William and Mrs. Miller in the old coach; Emily with her brother, and Edmund, in a post-chaise, and Cæsar bringing up the rear on horseback. They were at Leicester some hours before their friends from Melford, who arrived at the inn about one o'clock. After an affectionate meeting, and cordial congratulations, Lord Sudley's letter was communicated to Mr. Cowper, and it was determined that Edmund should go in person to wait upon him, and inform him of his mistake without loss of time. " To match your tidings of Lord Sud- " ley," said Mr. Cowper, " I have extraordinary " news to tell you. Have you seen the account in " the newspapers of the arrest of a Colonel Thorn- " ville, who is to be tried for forgery and bigamy?" —" Oh, yes!" replied Aubrey, " and grieved to

" think the army so disgraced."—" Then grieve no " more for the army," cried Mr. Cowper, " but " lament the fate, and the more because merited, of " our friend Jack Elton."—" Elton!" exclaimed Aubrey, with more horror than surprise, " Good " Heaven! Elton!"—" Even so," said Mr. Cowper, taking a letter from his pocket, and giving it to Aubrey, " he was taken up at Gloucester, and will " be brought to trial for forgery at the ensuing as- " sizes, which commence next week. The evidence " against him is complete, and there is no doubt that " he will pay the forfeit of his crime." The letter was addressed to Mr. Cowper at Melford, and was as follows :—

" Dear, worthy Mr. Cowper, I know the influence " of your character to be so great, and your heart " to be so inclined towards the unfortunate, that I " call upon you to save me, if possible, from a " wretched, ignominious fate. I will use no disin- " genuous artifice with you. I have spent my life " badly, but I see the folly of the course I have " taken, and if my life is spared me, I will atone for " all my misdeeds. Oh! that I had followed the " wise advice you gave me early in my outset! but " my heart fixed itself on false pleasures, and they " have brought me to this. Try, pray try to save " me, and you shall witness the reform your inter- " position will make. I am to be tried for a forgery, " committed in the name of Colonel Thornville; " but I am told by my lawyer, that I may contrive " not to be identified. I know not how he means to " manage it; but he says, if any man of known cha- " racter will appear in my favour, he will be answer- " able to get me off. Think, my dear Sir, that by " saving my life now, you will be the means of the " final salvation of a soul; and do not refuse your " assistance. At all events, in the name of all that

" is dear to you on earth, or in heaven, do not refuse " me the consolation of seeing you."

" I made it a point," said Mr. Cowper, when Aubrey had finished the letter, " to see him in " my way through Gloucester; but I found, by " his own account, and by the result of enquiry " elsewhere, that the evidence, both as to his per- " son and the fact, was positive and incontestable; " and I farther convinced him, that, if it were not " so, my appearance would be injurious to him: for " I could not possibly, in speaking of character, " omit the bad, more than the good parts of it. I " said all I could to lessen the horror of his fate, " without decreasing a sense of the awful scene that " awaits him; and I advised him not to rely on the " lawyer, but on that Judge who, by being privy to " the heart, can determine justice in mercy. He " shed tears, and I shook hands with him on part- " ing."—" Dreadful!" said Mrs. Aubrey, " that a " man of such ability, address, and good qualities, " should come to an end like this!"—" Yes, my " dear Madam," said Mr. Cowper, " it is dreadful, " but nothing is more natural: uncontrolled indul- " gence leads to guilt, and guilt to destruction. Self- " command is the only barrier against the torrent of " the passions; and he, whom neither religion nor " common sense can inspire with sufficient force to " raise it, must sooner or later be swept away."— " I never before heard," said Aubrey, " that he " was a married man."—" Nor I," said Cowper, " till in his contrition he acknowledged that he had " a wife in the South of England, to whom he had " hitherto sent a regular supply of money, on con- " dition of her not molesting him. The woman " whom he has lately deceived and married is in an " humble situation of life, but beautiful and inno- " cent: he deserves to suffer, if it were only for

" this; but however justice may guide us to doom " any being to suffer, a heart that has feeling cannot " but relent, in some degree, when the suffering " takes place. Poor wretch! he must endure " and pass away, and we must pity and forget " him."

As Mr. Cowper said this, to the surprise of his friends, he darted out of the room, leaving the door open, and in less than a minute returned, pulling in a stranger by the sleeve. " Yes, Sir," said Cowper to him, " I am happy I saw you before you " passed the window; the sooner this eclaircisse- " ment takes place the better; meanwhile, give me " leave to introduce you to Mrs. Smyth." He pointed to his sister, informing her at the same time that the person introduced was Mr. Smyth's doctor, at Okeham. " Upon my word, Madam," said the doctor, " I shall be very happy to present to you " Mr. Smyth, with whom I certainly have the ho- " nour of being acquainted; but I must beg leave " to say, that I think this gentleman is under a mis- " take. I am convinced you do not know Mr. " Smyth."—" Sir," said Mr. Cowper's sister, " it " is entirely at my brother's desire that I consent to " be near where Mr. Smyth is, and I hope I may " never see him; yet, if it should be necessary, I " certainly will confront him."—" Mr. Smyth is " much obliged to you, Madam," replied the doctor, " but what proof have you of his being your " Mr. Smyth? there are many of the name."— " The best proof, Sir," rejoined Mrs. Smith; " that " of my own eyes: I saw him in this very room, not " a minute before he drove off in the post-chaise for " Okeham."—" Why! my dear Madam," said he, raising his hands and eyes, " this is proof positive, " with a vengeance. Mr. Smyth was walking with " Mr. Bowater, not two minutes before I had the

" honour of being led in here by your brother. Bo-
" water is ordering some oranges for his desert to-
" day; and if you look out at the window you may
" see him pass." Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when Mr. Bowater appeared in sight, and Mr. Cowper, tapping at the window, received a nod from him, indicating his intention to come in. Having but to turn in at the gateway, he was presently in the parlour, amidst the company, to whom Mr. Cowper announced him by name, and separately introduced them to him. After paying his respects: " —But Mr. Cowper," said he, looking at the doctor, " it was not fair to forestal me: I meant
" to have had the pleasure of the eclaircissement
" at my house; however, I am glad you are
" no longer in suspense."—" I never was in sus-
" pense," said Mr. Cowper, " but I confess that my
" conduct depends entirely upon his, and he will find
" our proofs stronger than his assurance."—" Is it
" possible?" cried Mr. Bowater; " can I believe
" my ears? He must indeed possess matchless as-
" surance if he deny the truth before you both; and
" when I look round, I think he must be totally void
" of feeling, if he can persist." Then turning to the doctor, " For God's sake," continued he, seriously and with great warmth, " I entreat you to explain,
" my dear Smyth." Here the gentleman burst into a loud laugh, and going up to Mr. Cowper, said,
" Pray forgive me for the trick I have played you;
" but I could not help it for the life of me; it fell so
" pat in my way, and was so much to my humour."
Then advancing to Mrs. Smyth, said, " I earnestly
" beg *your* pardon, my dear Madam; I did not re-
" flect, or I should not have played upon your feel-
" ings, for they are of a serious nature. I would I
" could make you a reparation. Had I had the hap-
" piness some insensible scoundrel of my name has
" enjoyed, I should have prized it to the last breath

"I drew. I hope that not one Smyth in ten thou-
"sand is so devoid of taste and feeling as he to
"whom you were unhappily too favourable."—
"But, Sir," said Mrs. Smyth, "what does this
"mean? My eyes could not have so deceived me,
"as to make me mistake you for the man we talk of.
"Did you not come into this parlour in the after-
"noon that my brother followed you to Okeham?"
—"I certainly did not," replied he, "nor had I
"ever before the honour of seeing you."—"This is
"very unaccountable," said Cowper. "Let us
"call in the landlady," said Mr. Smyth, "she may
"throw some light upon the matter: perhaps *the*
"Mr. Smyth was in the house that day." The
landlady was called in; she said, "She knew of no
"other of that name being then at the inn; and
"that the Mr. Smyth in company was the person
"who went away in the post-chaise at the time the
"lady fainted: and she could give no clue by which
"the other could be traced."—"But, Sir," said
Mr. Cowper, addressing Mr. Smyth, "how could I
"be so deceived as I was at Okeham?"—"As for
"that," replied Smyth, "it is very easily account-
"ed for: you came prepared to be deceived, and my
"fancy was so much tickled with the images of the
"deception, that I could not let you escape. I seduc-
"ed the landlord into my scheme; I blacked my face
"with cork, that you might not distinguish me if you
"saw me, and I allowed you to catch me in the
"operation, that I might heighten your conviction,
"which I completed by expressions Bowater's let-
"ter enabled me to devise. To keep up the farce,
"as soon as you were satisfied of my being your
"man, I washed my face, and came down to you as
"my doctor; and the simplicity of your mind af-
"forded me an opportunity of giving you a sopori-
"fic, by which I got the start of you next morn-
"ing." Here Mr. Smyth, tickled with the recol-

lection of the scenes at Okeham, could not help laughing at them, and the remembrance had a similar effect on Mr. Cowper; but the rest of the company seemed more disgusted than delighted with humour displayed and enjoyed at the expence of a virtuous character, and which awakened and prolonged those painful feelings that Time was wearing out. Aubrey's countenance was particularly serious, and he was about to make some observations on the general defect of judgment in humourists, when Cowper, unwilling to spread a gloom on the day, prevented him, by jocularly saying, that Smyth the Merry-Andrew was certainly a more innocent man than Smyth the villain.—"Come, Aubrey," cried he, "let's be merry, we have caught a droll "fish."—"I own," said Smyth, "I carried the "joke too far, but from the good-nature I see in the "parties, I hope my repentance will not be unat- "tended with forgiveness." This being said seriously and feelingly, produced the effect intended; and Mr. Cowper setting the example, Mr. Smyth was received into the good graces of his friends. Mr. Bowater begged to add the Mariton to the Melford travellers at dinnner; and on his promising to let them off early, that they might reach Warwick before dark, the invitation was accepted.

The certainty of Mrs. Smyth's mind that she had seen her husband, was too positive to be disputed; yet the sudden vanishing of the apparition was as extraordinary as any of the reported illusions of fancy. It was equally vain to pursue the man as the phantom; and Cowper and the Smyths determined to resume their former indifference about him. After a pleasant day spent with Mr. Bowater, the party left Leicester, having interchanged places in their carriages. Mr. Cowper being in the coach with Aubrey, they consulted together respecting future ar-

rangements; and, as they approached Warwick, the subject of Lord Sudley presented itself. "I know "not," said Mr. Cowper, "why Edmund should "not profit by this man's death-bed generosity. He "has no children; his cousins are his nearest rela- "tions; and these descending from a female branch, "there is no heir to the title, which of course be- "comes extinct. I would not have him disinherit "them, but I really think that he who, at the risk "of his own life, saved his, is more entitled to con- "sideration than men who are watching anxiously "for his death. I shall not be sorry if, on an ex- "planation with Edmund, he should leave him a part "of his fortune." Aubrey agreed that it would be desirable, provided the gift were not extended to a devise of the family estate. As soon as the travellers arrived at Warwick, Mr. Cowper went himself to Lord Sudley's apothecary, Mr. Spence, to inquire what state his Lordship was in; and was informed that he could not last more than three or four days longer. As it was growing late, Edmund's visit was postponed till the next morning at eleven o'clock, Mr. Cowper being told by Mr. Spence that that would be the best hour to see his Lordship, and that he himself should then attend. In the course of the evening the conversation turned a great deal on the situation of Lord Sudley, on his character, his fortune, and family; and Mr. Cowper advised Edmund to argue with him on the propriety of suffering his possessions to descend to his heirs, but by no means to reject a bequest. In the morning Edmund rose earlier than the rest of the party, and calling up Arthur, the two friends strolled together over to Burford, where they breakfasted at Lord Sudley's steward's; and, at eleven, Edmund repaired to the castle. The first thing he did was to enquire for Mr. Spence, the apothecary, whose letter to Arthur

he acknowledged, and begged to know if his Lordship would see him then. "See you!" said Mr. Spence, "I believe it is the hope of seeing you that "has kept him alive for these two days past; for I "really think him better since he has talked of you "than he was a week ago. I must, however, break "the news of your arrival to him; so remain here "till I come to you again." Mr. Spence was not long before he returned; and, desiring Edmund to move gently and to speak low, conducted him to the chamber of the dying nobleman, and then retired.

Lord Sudley had been lifted from his bed and placed upon a couch: he was alone; and, as Edmund approached him, he raised his hollow, dim eyes towards him, gave him his hand, and, with a faint voice, desired him to sit in the chair which, by his direction, the apothecary had purposely placed near the couch. Edmund obeyed. "I revive at the sight "of you, my worthy young friend," continued he, in the same feeble voice: "you shall help me to die "with more tranquillity than I thought. Oh! death "is dreadful to me! but I have endeavoured to rob "him of a little of his terror by a will, in which I have "both discharged as far as I could my obligation to "you, and made an atonement for the injury I once "did your virtuous mother, by an infamous slander." Pausing through feebleness, Edmund seized the opportunity to undeceive him. "Permit me, my "Lord," said he, in a low tone of voice, replete with tenderness, "to say a few words before you pro-"ceed."—"Do," said he, again putting out his hand, and pressing Edmund's, "do, my dear Mr. "Aubrey; and, if your speech be but as kind as "your countenance, it will be a cordial to my soul."—"I wish, my Lord," replied Edmund, "that it were "in my power to say any thing that might produce "such a happy effect: most happy should I be to

" say it; but I fear I shall rather damp your feelings " by the awkwardness of my communication. Your " Lordship knows me to be the fortunate person who " was so timely in his visit of your grounds; but it is " necessary that I should inform you that, from my " leaving you to learn my name at your steward's, " you have supposed me to be the friend whom I " that day accompanied, and who, being better " known than I at Burford, was reported to your " Lordship: I am not Arthur Aubrey."—" Then, " for God's sake!" cried Lord Sudley, exerting his feeble voice; " tell me instantly who you are: " what is your name?"—" My name," replied he, " is Smyth."—" Smyth!" said Lord Sudley, staring at the manly youth softening into tears at the sad state of the object before him: " Smyth! and " your christian name?"—" Edmund,"—" How!" exclaimed Lord Sudley, in great agitation; " what " was your father?"—" Alas! my Lord, I never knew " a father!"—" Where were you born?"—" At " Oporto." Lord Sudley gazed wildly, and attempted to speak; but, before he could utter a word, his eyes closed, and his head sunk back upon his chair.

Edmund, prepared by the account given of Lord Sudley's state for his death, conceived he was gone for ever, and stood contemplating mortality. He raised the hand that had fallen by his side, and held it in his, examining the emaciated appearance of premature exhaustion. " Who," thought he, " that could " behold such a figure as this, from which the soul " has been expelled before its time by debauchery, " but would avoid the course, the fatal, certain " course, that leads to so deplorable an end!" He still held the hand, and was looking earnestly at the face, when Lord Sudley, who had only fainted, opened his eyes. Edmund, seeing his mistake,

gently replaced on the chair his Lordship's hand, by which he felt his own softly pressed, and hastened to the antichamber for the apothecary, who, returning with him, soon revived his patient by applying the usual stimulants. On coming to himself, Lord Sudley beckoned Edmund to him, pulled him to his bosom, and cried over him like a child. This emotion Edmund ascribed to debility and dotage; and he had too much tenderness in his heart to interrupt the gratification of the dying man, whom he suffered to fold him in his arms with all the ardour the poor feeble limbs around him could testify. For some minutes Lord Sudley continued weeping and embracing the passive youth, till Mr. Spence desired he would desist, if he wished not to be speedily exhausted. He now restrained himself; and Edmund rose from his reclining posture. After gazing at him for a minute: "This," cried Lord Sudley, "must be the work of a prescient Being." He then desired Edmund to take his chair again; and, having recruited his strength by a cordial draught, endeavoured to compose himself, that he might speak with consistency. "You know not—" He stopped; his heart was too full, his mind laboured; he considered a minute, and then proceeded thus: "I "have bethought me: I will act coolly. Tell me, "dear boy, have you any relations near this place?" —"My Lord," said Edmund, "my uncle, my "mother, and sister, are now at Warwick."—"Merciful God!" cried Lord Sudley, "this is thy "work! Mr. Spence, I beg you will instantly order "my coach, and go and entreat them to come to "me immediately; assure them that their presence "is of the utmost importance to this youth, and "take no denial."—"My Lord," said Edmund, "permit me—"—"No; oh, no! you must not leave "me again while I live!" replied his Lordship. Ed-

mund then told him that the Aubreys were with his family, and that Arthur was at his steward's house. "Is it possible!" cried Lord Sudley, throwing his faint eyes up to Heaven; "well, so much the bet-"ter. Mr. Spence, tell them, I beseech them all "to come; tell them to come in mercy to a dying "man!" Edmund said that, if his Lordship would allow him only to step to Burford while the carriage was getting ready, he would desire his friend to enforce his request in such a manner as would ensure an immediate compliance; and, on his promise to be absent but a few minutes, Lord Sudley acquiesced. His Lordship's nurse being called in, he was left to her care; while the apothecary went to execute the commission given to him.

Edmund told Arthur what had passed at Sudley castle, and pressed him not to let Mrs. Aubrey or his sisters stay behind; for, as his mother was mentioned in Lord Sudley's will, she should render his last hours as easy as might be effected by a personal forgiveness. Arthur promised to bring the whole party; and Mr. Spence coming up to the steward's door in the coach, Arthur went into it; and Edmund returned to Lord Sudley. "Edmund!" said his Lordship, "come hither. My boy," continued he, gazing at him, "I have something for you to "do. There is paper in the drawer of this little "table, and here is pen and ink; write what I dic-"tate." Edmund took a pen, and wrote the following short note in his Lordship's words: "Lord "Sudley has business of the utmost importance, "which admits of no delay, and desires that Mr. "Langford will come to Sudley castle on receiving "this." Having folded it and directed it to John Langford, Esq. Warwick, the nurse was ordered to dispatch it immediately by a man on horseback. Edmund remained with Lord Sudley, and, imputing

his emotions to his enfeebled state, submitted kindly to be gazed at, to be occasionally embraced and bathed in tears, and to be examined on the events of his life, his education, and his principles. Meanwhile, Arthur and Mr. Spence arrived at the inn at Warwick, and, though Mrs. Aubrey at first objected, soon prevailed upon the whole party to go to Sudley castle. On their arrival, they were shown into the magnificent library formerly described, which had a communication, by means of a private staircase, with the suite of apartments occupied by Lord Sudley. Mr. Spence, who returned with the company, went alone to his Lordship, to announce with caution the success of his commission. On hearing it; "Spence," said he, "I have a very severe trial "to go through; give me something to assist me in "supporting it." Having taken a cordial, he said that he felt as if he were equal to it: "but," added he, "attend to my directions. I can only admit "the party gradually; and, perhaps, I shall not be "able to see them all. I wish to see Mr. and Mrs. "Aubrey first." Mr. Spence went for them; and, while he was gone, Edmund placed chairs near the couch to receive them. "How good is this!" said Lord Sudley, as Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey advanced towards him, "to consent to relieve in some de-"gree the heavy, the very heavy burden that is "weighing me down."—"My Lord," said Aubrey, "you will render it light by devoting your soul to "that unfeigned repentance which we have learned "from the best authority is so valued in Heaven."—"Alas!" replied Lord Sudley, "there can be but "little hope in a death-bed repentance; yet what "hope there may be must arise from actions, not "from vain, timid cries, addressed to the Almighty. "I have more hope in the justice which God, in his "goodness, has called upon me to do before I die,

" than in all the prayers a guilty conscience can " dictate. In the outset of my life, I infamously " wronged that lovely, virtuous woman, the dis- " tresses of whose family have lately reached my " ear: if putting them above distress be any atone- " ment, oh! accept and forgive me!"—" I do for- " give you, my Lord," said Mrs. Aubrey, so affected that the tears ran down her cheeks; " I forgive " you from the bottom of my heart."—" Thank " you! thank you!" said Lord Sudley: " O! that " I could as easily obtain the forgiveness of all; but " reparation is out of my power. Among others, " that poor, weak woman, who calls herself Lady " Sudley; alas! justice compels me to degrade " her in the sight of the world: Aubrey, she is not " legally my wife; but I delay too long an act which " I was willing you should witness. Pray, Mr. " Spence, request the favour of Mr. Cowper to come " in." While Mr. Spence was gone for him, Lord Sudley pointing to Edmund, said to the Aubreys: " you know who this youth is; that I am indebted " to him for saving my life; can I do better than " bestow my fortune on him?"—" My Lord," said Aubrey, " he is worthy of your generosity; but he " thinks, with all his friends, that your Lordship's " heir—"—" Should inherit the bulk of my fortune," said Lord Sudley, interrupting Aubrey: " it is a " just opinion, and shall have its full weight upon " my conduct at this awful crisis."

Here the nurse coming in from the anti-chamber, told his Lordship that Mr. Langford was at the door; and was bid to send him in immediately. Mr. Langford entered on his tip-toes, and silently took a chair by Aubrey. He was hardly seated, when Mr. Spence introduced Mr. Cowper, who, advancing towards Lord Sudley, said, " At your request, my Lord, " though with much pain —" he stopped, looked

stedfastly at Lord Sudley, then shrank back as if gazing at a phantom. Lord Sudley, fixing his eyes on Mr. Cowper, said deliberately, in a faint but hollow voice: "This is no time for resentment; I am "going to my last account, and justice will be done; "but, while I yet live, tell this noble youth, as he "might well doubt from me what I hardly believe "myself, who I am." This address, and Mr. Cowper's extreme surprise, excited the utmost astonishment in the Aubreys and Edmund. "I am not "mistaken, then?" said Mr. Cowper; "you tell me "that my eyes do not deceive me."—"It was a "healthy face that deceived you, Cowper," replied Lord Sudley; "my hollow cheeks and dying eyes "tell you truth."—"Great God!" cried Cowper, "how inscrutable thy providence! but in all things "thou wilt appear, here or hereafter, omniscient, "just, and good. Oh! be merciful to this unhappy "repentant creature, and forgive him all his sins!" He then took Edmund by the hand, and, placing it in Lord Sudley's, said, "Take him, my Lord; I "present you a son worthy a throne." The astonished youth knelt to embrace his father; who, gently pressing him to his heart, said, "Yes, you are "my son, *I* glory to acknowledge *you;* but I am "afraid *you* will never be brought to believe that "you are the son of a man who could desert you "and your mother; of that villain Smyth, who, after "betraying and ruining your pure, unsuspicious "uncle, left you on his hands in a foreign land, "without the means of support. But, if you *do* ac- "knowledge me, I know you will forgive me; for "you have learned of him how to forbear and how "to forgive."—"Oh, my Lord! my Lord!" cried Edmund.—"My Lord!" replied Lord Sudley; "and "will you not give me a tenderer title?"—"Oh, "yes; my father," cried Edmund, whose tears flow-

ed doubly at the omission, natural as it was: "I "beseech you not to reproach yourself; for your "present sentiments more than compensate all that "is past." Here Mr. Spence interposed, and begged Lord Sudley to rest for some time: then turning to Mr. Cowper, assured him that it was of the utmost consequence to the settlement of his affairs, that his Lordship should exert himself no more at present.—"I am sensible that Mr. Spence is right," said Lord Sudley; "it will be better that I should be "left for a little while; I feel myself again exhausted. Go, Edmund, and plead with your mother "and your sister to forgive and see me. Do you, "Cowper, tell them that you have prayed for me; "your example will have a good effect: so will Mrs. "Aubrey's; and do, my dear madam, tell Lady "Sudley that I would have seen her first; but that, "when I reflected, I thought the discovery would "be better made by her brother. Aubrey, I shall "want to talk with you by and by; you will not, I "hope, leave Sudley castle at present." Aubrey said that he would not; and, after giving his hand to Lord Sudley, who held out his to him, led Mrs. Aubrey out, followed by Edmund. "Cowper," said Lord Sudley, as he was about to follow, "all "things will be easily explained: Mr. Langford, "that gentleman, is my agent, and was the person "who obtained my remittances in the name of "Smyth, and forwarded them to Oporto, though till "this morning he never heard any thing of my marriage with your sister; but she, no doubt, has the "certificate, and I now acknowledge her before him "as Lady Sudley." Mr. Cowper, presenting him his hand, and saying that his present conduct made all the amends he could wish, left the room; but Mr. Langford staid a few minutes longer to receive some instructions from his Lordship.

How the relation of this extraordinary event was received in the library, will be readily conceived. Wonder, with confused emotions of sorrow and joy, pervaded the friendly circle. Edmund's mother, who had been long resigned to the will of Providence, and whose resignation had not been disturbed, though her nerves had been agitated by the sight of her husband at Leicester, yielded, when her surprise abated, to those feelings which, in spite of her injuries, were inspired by the account of Lord Sudley's sufferings and conduct; and she blessed God that his dissolution had been sufficiently protracted to allow the view of death to awaken in his mind a sense of his eternal danger. When she was told that he had acknowledged her before his agent as Lady Sudley, the gratification she expressed turned entirely on the prospect it opened for her children. The affecting scene that had passed, and the solemn event about to take place in the castle, restrained all pleasurable feelings among the young folks, who spoke more by looks than by words.

After resting about two hours on his bed, Lord Sudley was again lifted to the couch, and an interview took place between him and Lady Sudley, whose forgiveness, in consideration of his awful state and repentance, was bestowed as soon as it was asked. Edmund presented his sister, of whose birth Lord Sudley had never heard till she was mentioned by her brother. She bore a stronger resemblance to his family even than Edmund, and he wept over her as he had done over him. Mr. Spence, who still attended, would not suffer such scenes to be prolonged; and Lord Sudley desired Edmund and Harriet to go and stay with Arthur and his sisters, and request Mr. Cowper, Aubrey, and Mrs. Aubrey, to come to his chamber. In the mean time, Lord Sudley listened to the affecting consolations of Lady

Sudley, who was speaking when her brother and the Aubreys entered. "Cowper," said Lord Sudley, as soon as they were seated, "in a worldly "point of view, what have I not lost by my deser- "tion of this angelic woman! but, alas! even that, "great as it is, is small in comparison with the loss "of my soul. Oh, death! death! how dreadful art "thou to the wicked man! *The sting of death is sin!* "and where, Aubrey, where is the kind hand that "can extract it on the bed of death?" Before Aubrey expressed his sentiment on this question, he thought it proper to inquire into the nature and progress of Lord Sudley's repentance. His Lordship frankly owned that he never had had any opinion of the doctrines of religion till the view of death brought him to reflect on a future state; that, all hope in this life failing, he had by degrees wrought himself into a conviction of the truths of revealed religion, which he said he found more strongly supported by reason than he had ever thought possible, and even more than natural religion, to which there was an objection no strength of reason could surmount, arising from the mixture of evil in the work of a benevolent power; an objection that had been removed by the light of the gospel, which, with all its difficulties, had furnished the only clue for conducting the understanding through the mazes in which it was entangled in the study of the nature of man; that, on this conviction, he had become a Christian, and had taken the sacrament: that he had endeavoured to atone for his sins, but that in general from the nature of his crimes, reparation was out of his power; though God had manifested his goodness by unexpectedly bringing in his way those whom he had most injured. "Did you not know, my Lord," said Cowper, "that I lived at Melford?"—"On "the contrary," replied Lord Sudley, "I was cer-

" tain you had left it; I knew of your distress in " town, and conceived that you had abandoned " England altogether with your sister: and, as for " Edmund, I did not even recollect his existence." —" Permit me, my Lord," said Cowper, " to ask if " you did not once see Lady Sudley at an inn at " Leicester ?"—" Never," replied he. " It is very " strange," said Lady Sudley, " I certainly saw you, " my Lord. Were you not at an inn when——" " —I now remember it well;" said he, " You must " have been the lady into whose parlour I obtruded; " by the best hope I can form, I swear I did not " know you; and I left the room in consequence of " finding my error by your confusion. I passed a " chaise that was at the door, and got into my own " carriage, which stood in the street. I had long " given up every idea of your being in England. " Since I have been aware of the dangerous state I " am in, I have thought of you day after day with " the most terrible forebodings of punishment on " your account; and oh! what would I not have " given a week ago to have foreseen this meeting !" " I am now satisfied, my Lord," said Lady Sudley, " that you did not know me; pray compose your- " self, and be assured that the goodness of God will " not end here."—" Oh ! you are an angel," cried he, " I wish I could think that it could be extended " to so uncertain a repentance as mine. Of what " value can that repentance be that begins in fear?" —" My Lord," said Aubrey, " after what you have " said, and the conduct I have this day witnessed, I " have no doubt that your mind is truly renewed; " and, though a change of life and heart, on which " the promises of the gospel depend, cannot be sud- " denly ascertained by man, yet so great is the " mercy of the Almighty, uniting with his omnis- " cience, that I scruple not to pronounce my opi-

" nion to be full of hope."—" Indeed, my dear " friends," said Lord Sudley with a deep sigh, " I " am sure my mind is entirely turned and renewed; " and, though I was first roused by horror, my re- " flection is now grown up into a settled faith and " conversion *." " Then, my Lord," said Aubrey, " be assured that *Death is swallowed up in victory.*" Aubrey, with the assistance of Cowper and Lady Sudley, continued some time pouring into his ulcered heart the balm of religious consolation, till he was warned by the return of his pains, which began to attack him at a certain time of the day, to be removed to his bed, and to take his opiates. They then left him, with a promise to continue at Sudley castle all night; and Lady Sudley said she should return to assume her privilege of attending him as a nurse.

It being known that the party were to remain at the castle, dinner was served in the eating room of his Lordship's apartments, and beds were prepared on the other side of the house. The servants, having learned the discovery of Edmund's title, were extremely assiduous in their attentions to him and their lady, who were modestly solicited to direct what was their pleasure. The conversation of the party ran on the occurrences unfolded by the event of the morning; and the rest of the day was tinctured with wonder and gloom. They retired early to their respective chambers, and Lady Sudley spent the night watching by her dying Lord. The next morning,

* These words were Rochester's to Bishop Burnet. I wish I had room to interweave, in the conclusion of this novel, the death-bed repentance of that witty debauchee: but this volume being already swelled much beyond the common bulk, I shall content myself with referring my readers to it in the Bishop's account, under the title of *Some Passages of the Life and Death of John, Earl of Rochester:* a book strongly recommended by Dr. Johnson.

with the assistance of Mr. Spence, who returned to the castle about ten o'clock, he was again able to sit up, and to talk with his comforters. His heavy eyes dwelt on Edmund and Harriet by turns, and he frequently ejaculated; "To part with them just as "I have found them!" In the course of the forenoon he said to Mr. Cowper, that there was a circumstance which hitherto, among weightier concerns, had escaped his memory; "You know too "well," said he, "the irreparable injury I did you "by my proceedings at Oporto; but you have no "idea of what chiefly instigated me to that diaboli-"cal conduct: you do not know that it was because "you interrupted me in one of my early pursuits of "vice. Do you remember the battle you fought in "a field leading to Melford?"—"Too well," said Mr. Cowper. "I was your antagonist," continued Lord Sudley. "I recollected you at Oporto, and "at the same time perceived that I was not recog-"nized. Enraged at being robbed of a prize dis-"covered for me by one of my people, I resolved to "be revenged upon you. I had previously planned "your sister's ruin; but, finding that impracti-"cable, I indulged my horrid passion by complet-"ing yours. Oh! dreadful, dreadful! and the man "I ruined forgives me! There, there, Aubrey, is "the triumph of christianity." Upon this, he continued for some time commenting on the excellency of the precepts of the gospel, particularly those of forgiveness, and the love of one's enemies; precepts which, while they seemed unnatural in the heterogeneous compound of the human heart, were, on reflection, celestial in their nature. He could not, however, speak long at once; and he was now earlier exhausted than he had been the day before. After he was in bed, Mr. Langford brought him his will, altered according to the instructions he had

received; and it was regularly executed in presence of Mr. Langford, Mr. Spence, and his Lordship's steward. He then took it into his own hand, and gave it to Lady Sudley, who deposited it in his table drawer. He soon after took his opiates, and fell into a sleep: he woke in the course of the night, and spoke once or twice to Lady Sudley; and once she heard him praying devoutly. About two in the morning he died, without any convulsion, or even a groan.

Lord Sudley's life had excited abhorrence; but his death raised compassion. It cannot, however, be imagined that the sorrow it created was either deep or durable in hearts unguided by any previous attachment. It was deepest with Edmund, now Lord Sudley; for both the life and death of his father left a serious impression on his mind, and combining with the wonderful change of his own lot, produced a thoughtfulness which yielded only to time. Edmund's affairs being now of the first importance to Mr. Cowper, hesent an express to Melford with letters to Mr. Grey and young Cowsel, informing them of the event that had taken place, and requesting their attention to his affairs at Eden-bower till he returned: nor could the Aubreys refuse the solicitation of the young Lord Sudley and his mother, to continue for the present at Sudley castle. The day after Lord Sudley's death his will was read by Mr. Langford before the whole party, including Mr. Spence and the servants. It was not long: it briefly acknowledged Edmund as his heir, leaving him all his fortune, after the payment of the following bequests: to Harriet, thirty thousand pounds; to Mrs. Aubrey, an annuity of three hundred pounds for her life; to Mr. Cowper, two thousand pounds, besides small legacies to his servants. To Lady Sudley, he appointed three thousand pounds a year for her join-

ture, and bequeathed her his coach and four, and three thousand pounds for the purchase of plate and household goods. Previous to the funeral, Arthur wrote an account of all that had happened to his friend Sensitive, not forgetting to mention the bequests of the late Lord Sudley's will; and at the same time telling him that he should soon be in town to profit by Mr. Hamline's friendship in his voyage to St. Kitt's. The funeral was deferred for a week; and Mr. Langford, at the request of Edmund, wrote letters before it took place to his relations. The interment was conducted with a suitable magnificence: and when it was over, Edmund was congratulated by his friends on his accession to his title and fortune. "You, my dear uncle," said Edmund, "who taught me to conquer adversity, must teach "me to bear prosperity."—"I know one," said Mr. Cowper, looking at Emily, "who will be a "more agreeable instructor." Emily coloured. "When Miss Aubrey undertakes the task," continued he, "I am confident you will be an apt scho-"lar."—"Sir," said Emily, "the situation of "things is very much altered since we left Mariton. "I have a very sincere regard for your nephew, "but I hope you will not take it amiss that I beg "Lord Sudley to consider all that passed between "him and me there as if it had never occurred."—"Heavens! Miss Aubrey!" cried Lord Sudley, "what can you mean? I would rather resign the "remembrance of every occurrence here, and wake "as from a dream of splendour, than consent that "a word or a look that you bestowed upon me at "Mariton should be torn from my memory. What "will prosperity be to me if you and Arthur do not "agree to share it with me?"—"To the mind you "now possess I still adhere," replied Emily, "but "as I never entered into any engagements with

" Lord Sudley, it would be unjust to hold him bound " by any that he had made before he knew himself. " If, six months hence, I find him Edmund, I will " have no objection, in spite of my want of fortune, " to renew my engagement; but till then I declare " Lord Sudley as free as if he had never entered " into any." Aubrey, taking Lord Sudley by the hand, declared his approbation of Emily's delicacy, " for," said he, " it is not overstrained. I am con- " fident she believes your heart invariable, Edmund; " and your choice should be that of Lord Sudley's." Mr. Cowper concurring; " Then," cried Edmund, " as Lord Sudley, I vow my heart to be as constant " to her as ever it could have been as Edmund's: " but she is all that she ought to be. And now, my " dear Arthur," continued he, " make me happy " by dropping all thoughts of the West Indies. I " know my sister loves you——" Poor Harriet was thunderstruck; her blood flew to her face, and her eyes were cast to the ground—" Why," proceeded he, " should we trifle with happiness? why not " speak plainly in this circle of friends, so dear to " one another? Harriet's fortune is thirty thousand " pounds; to be equal with her accept thirty thou- " sand more from me, and let us determine all to be " happy."

Here Lord Sudley was interrupted by one of his servants, who told him that a gentleman at the gate had got off his horse, and was coming in. " Did he " tell you his name?" said Lord Sudley. " No, my " Lord," said the servant, " I was not near him, " but I saw him alight, and walk through the yard." —" Perhaps," said Mr. Cowper, " your disappoint- " ed relation, to ascertain your title."—" At all " events, show him in," said Lord Sudley. He had scarcely spoken when the door opened, and Charles Sensitive, with his placid smile and gentle air, came

forward, and going up to Lord Sudley, took him by the hand and said; "My Lord, I have not time to "congratulate you, but come join with me and con- "gratulate our friend Aubrey. Aubrey," continued he, putting a large parchment into his hand, "here, "take it, my dear friend, and God bless you with "it; Aubrey-hall is your own again."—"More "wonders!" cried Arthur. The astonished party gazed at Aubrey as he rapidly cast his eye here and there over the writing. "My uncle's will!" cried he, "what can this mean?"—"I'll tell you," said Sensitive, "and save you some time: Your cousin, "Mr. Arthur Aubrey, and your old honest solici- "tor, Mr. Lamb, are two rascals. Lamb, bribed "highly by your cousin to destroy this will, swore "to him he did, but kept it as the seconder of oc- "casional motions for supplies from the pockets of "the villain. They lately quarrelled, and Lamb, "before a friend of mine, threw out a threat that "implied the existence of such an instrument. On "hearing it, I determined without loss of time to "make an attempt to recover it. I went to Chelms- "ford, and took him unawares. I told him that his "villany was discovered by a person who had heard "him and his confederate quarrelling; and that it "was in his power to save his own life by depositing "the will immediately in my hand. The colour had "forsaken his cheek the moment I mentioned a dis- "covery, but he was not so easily tricked; and while "his teeth chattered with sudden terror, he asked "what I meant by such a charge. Still he was civil, "said he was taken ill, begged I would excuse him "a few minutes, and went out leaving me in his of- "fice. Casting my eyes on two tin boxes on which "the name of Aubrey was painted in large letters, "I seized them without hesitation, and ran off with "them as fast as I could to a friend's house. I had

" not patience to wait; in presence of my friend I " broke open the boxes, and, to my unspeakable " joy, found the will that made you heir to Aubrey-" hall regularly executed. There it is, and God " Almighty bless you with it."

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the feelings and expressions that were the result of this conduct of Sensitive's; Aubrey, Cowper, the whole party in short were in raptures with him. Mr. Cowper with great delight told him that he had saved him three thousand pounds more than he had allowed himself to hope, so that he would have a large surplus, amounting to at least nine thousand pounds!— " Nine thousand pounds!" cried Aubrey, looking at Arthurina, " I hope he will find a wife with more " than double that sum." Sensitive understood him, and pressed his hand. Sudley-castle, in spite of the melancholy air cast over it by the mourning occasioned by the late awful event, assumed a spirit of joy which the good sense of those who felt it manifested with that decency and delicacy counterfeelings required. In the autumn Lord Sudley led Emily to the altar, and at the same time Harriet gave her hand to Arthur. Sensitive and Arthurina made a third couple; and Aubrey promised Arthur-William that in one year more he should look for a mistress among the muses at Cambridge.

THE END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

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